Maximum Rock n roll

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– ISSUE #390 – – NOVEMBER 2015 – $4.99 –

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

GRACE AMBROSE

BIKINI KILL – Revolution Girl Style Now LP
SACCHARINE TRUST – LP / MERCENÁRIAS – EP
BUCK BILOXI – Streets of Rage LP
EUTANASIA – Sentimiento De Agitación LP
BILLY SYNTH – both LPs
COLD BEAT – Into the Air LP / VACATION – Non-Person LP
RATA NEGRA – Corasones EP
PICCADILLY CIRCUS – "Till I Get To The Top" 45
LEATHER – Easy LP / MIND CONTROL – Dig EP
NOXIOUS FUMES – Commencement Bay EP

LYDIA ATHANASOPOULOU

AUSENCIA – EP / STRESS SS – Vit Fosfor EP
CADAVER EM TRANSE – EP
BILLY SYNTH – both LPs
EUTANASIA – Sentimiento De Agitación LP
MIND CONTROL – Dig EP / HALDOL – 12"
BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – Streets of Rage LP
WASTED TALENT – LP / RATA NEGRA – EP
FZ–10 – Kaötika Existencia EP / KOOL 100s – EP
FUCKING – Atomic Orgasm EP
LESION – Sectarian Rites EP

MATT BADENHOP

STEEL CHAINS/REMNANTS/ARCTIC FLOWERS – live
CHAOS DISORDER AND PANIC / VOTARINE – live
MERCENÁRIAS – Demo 1983 EP
FZ–10 – Kaötika Existencia EP
AUSENCIA – Sombre de Exilio EP
ČORNA KRUŠWA – =:–) EP
LONG KNIFE – Meditations On Self Destructions LP
RATA NEGRA – Corasones EP
EUTANASIA – Sentimiento De Agitación LP
FUCKING – Atomic Orgasm EP / STRESS SS EP

WILL BLOMQUIST

MARDOU – "Rimbaud/Bounty Hunter"
PAWNS – Eternal Return EP
GATTACA – LP
CADAVER EM TRANCE – EP
CAT PARTY / TERMINAL A, etc. – 4-way split EP
ČORNA KRUŠWA – =:–) EP
RAGANA / IWOKK / VILE INTENT – live
FOSSIL ARMS / BEDROOM WITCH – live
VEXX / AGE OF COLLAPSE – live
HOT BREATH / PAPER BEE – live

MITCH CARDWELL

BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – Streets of Rage LP
MERCENÁRIAS – Demo 1983 EP
PATOIS COUNSELORS – Clean Skits EP
DWIGHT TWILLEY – "Fire Fly/Living In the City"
THE INTELLIGENCE – Vintage Future LP
BARRERACUDAS – Can Do Easy LP
AUSMUTEANTS – "Mates Rates/Echo Beach"
PICCADILLY CIRCUS – "Till I Get To The Top" 45
PINK TILES – live
ROBBERY – live

ROBERT COLLINS

HORSE & DEER – live
SMÅSTADSLIV – Näkyjä EP
SCHIZOPHASIA – CS
COLD BEAT – Into the Air LP
RAD – live
STRESS SS – Vit Fosfor EP
ASSHOLE PARADE – live
V/A – Fast/Violence CS
LONG KNIFE – Meditations On Self Destructions LP
EXHAAUST – CS + live / GODSTOMPER – live

LAYLA GIBBON

BIKINI KILL – Revolution Girl Style Now LP
SACCHARINE TRUST – LP / MERCENÁRIAS – EP
RAW PONY – "Bo Diddley/Shattered"
AUSMUTEANTS – "Mates Rates/Echo Beach"
SEX CRIME – I Am an Observer–EP
BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – Streets Of Rage LP
PICCADILLY CIRCUS – "Till I Get To The Top" 45
LEATHER – Easy LP
RATA NEGRA – Corasones EP
NOXIOUS FUMES – Commencement Bay EP

DAN GOETZ

STRESS SS – Vit Fosfor EP
FUCK SS – CS
RATA NEGRA – Corasones EP
AYE NAKO – The Blackest Eye 12"
NOXIOUS FUMES – Commencement Bay EP
SEM HASTRO – live / PURE DISGUST – live
COLD BEAT – Into the Air LP
CHONDRIA – CS
EARTH GIRLS – Someone I'd Like to Know EP
LEATHER – Easy LP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl, CD-only, or demo releases to the address on the previous page

GREG HARVESTER

- CHAOS DISORDER AND PANIC – live
- BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – Streets Of Rage LP
- CONSTANT INSULT – I Quit 12"
- AYE NAKO – The Blackest Eye 12"
- EARTH GIRLS – Someone I'd Like to Know EP
- HARK HOW THE BELLS – live
- MIND CONTROL – Dig EP
- AUSENCIA – Sombre de Exilio EP
- STRESS SS – Vit Fosfor EP
- RAW PONY – "Bo Diddley/Shattered"

KENNY KAOS

- CONSTANT INSULT – I Quit 12"
- BARRERACUDAS – Can Do Easy LP
- PRETTY PRETTY – Talkin' to the Walls EP
- VACATION – "Back to the Land/Back to the Land"
- VACATION – The Do Shit Wax 10"
- VACATION – Non–Person LP
- MANDATES – In The Back Of Your Heart LP
- SEX CRIME – I Am an Observer–EP
- AUSMUTEANTS – "Mates Rates/Echo Beach"
- LUNCHBOX – Smash Hits EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- RAW PONY – 45 / SEX CRIME – EP
- KIM & LEANNE – True West LP
- AUSMUTEANTS – "Mates Rates/Echo Beach"
- BROWN SPIDERS – It's Something To Do" 45
- KOOL 100S – We Buy Gold EP
- THE HANGMEN – "What A Girl Can't Do" 45
- BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – Streets Of Rage LP
- BILLY SYNTH – both LPs
- EBENEZER &THE BLUDGEONS – EP / CANCERS – 45
- THE DICKS/DAMNED/JOHNNY MOPED – films

RAY LUJAN

- BARRERACUDAS – Can Do Easy LP
- COLD BEAT – Into the Air LP
- DIRECT HIT! – More Of The Same CD
- DOUBTFIRE – CD
- EARTH GIRLS – Someone I'd Like to Know EP
- GOOD SHADE – Good Shade LP
- LUNCHBOX – Smash Hits EP
- DWIGHT TWILLEY – "Fire Fly/Living In the City"
- WORRIERS – Imaginary Life LP
- THE DAMNED – live

ROTTEN RON READY

- STRESS SS – Vit Fosfor EP
- AUSENCIA – Sombre de Exilio EP
- CROWN COURT – Ruck and Roll EP
- OBN IIIs – Worth A Lot Of Money LP
- RATA NEGRA – Corasones EP
- FZ–10 – Kaötika Existencia EP
- MERCENÁRIAS – Demo 1983 EP
- NOXIOUS FUMES – Commencement Bay EP
- MOTORHEAD – live
- GAG – three songs live

FRED SCHRUNK

- RATA NEGRA – Corasones EP
- MERCENÁRIAS – Demo 1983 EP
- VACATION – LP, EP & 45
- EARTH GIRLS – Someone I'd Like to Know EP
- BILLY SYNTH – both LPs
- AYE NAKO – The Blackest Eye 12"
- WORRIERS – Imaginary Life LP
- MIND CONTROL – Dig EP
- CONSTANT INSULT – I Quit 12"
- STRESS SS – Vit Fosfor EP

LENA TAHMASSIAN

- COLD BEAT – Into the Air LP
- ČORNA KRUŠWA – =:–) EP
- RATA NEGRA – Corasones EP
- HEX DISPENSERS – III CD
- HALDOL – 12"
- AUSENCIA – Sombra de Exilio EP
- EARTH GIRLS – Someone I'd Like to Know EP
- CAT PARTY / TERMINAL A, etc. – 4-way split EP
- AYE NAKO – The Blackest Eye 12"
- LATEX – live

ELI WALD

- MERCENÁRIAS – Demo 1983 EP
- COLD BEAT – Into the Air LP
- LEATHER – Easy LP / STRESS SS – Vit Fosfor EP
- CONCEALED BLADE – Demo 2015 EP
- AUSENCIA – Sombre de Exilio EP
- BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – Streets of Rage LP
- FUCKING – Atomic Orgasm EP
- BILLY SYNTH – both LPs
- CADAVER EM TRANSE – EP
- MIND CONTROL – Dig EP

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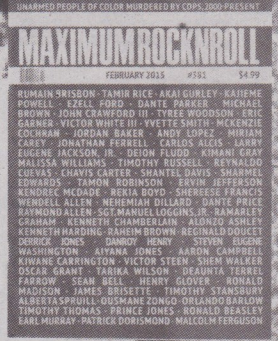
LIKE WHAT YOU'RE READING IN MRR #390?
RECOMMENDED READING FROM THE MRRchive:

MRR #306/Nov '08

In which Do You Hear We? Fest mainstays SHELLSHAG are interviewed. Also: Brain Handle, Assassins, Diodes (pt. 1), 97 Shiki, Black Dove, No Bunny, Sista Sekunden, Vivian Girls, Animals And Men.

MRR #328/Oct '10.

An interview Ohio's PUFFY AREOLAS, just one of many OBNOX affiliates in Ohio. Also: AGNOSTIC FRONT (Bruce Roehrs' last interview), SUPER WILD HORSES from Australia, Macedonia's BERNAYS PROPAGANDA, RAPE REVENGE from Canada, Boston's CONVERSIONS, and scene reports from New York City and the Czech Republic. Cover art by Welly of Artcore zine.



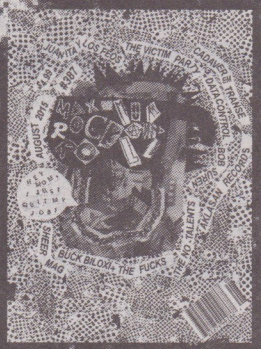
MRR #381/Feb '15.

A photospread from Toronto's Not Dead Yet fest, The Pacific Northwest's HYSTERICS, Liz Panella of EARTH GIRLS with Scott Plant of BROKEN PRAYER, Oslo's DARK TIMES, Madrid's ACCIDENTE, London's QUANGO, Vancouver's VACANT STATE, Mallorca's Metadona label, WICCANS from TX, and an Iceland scene report with Reykjavik's BÖRN.

RECENT BACK ISSUES:
MRR's Latest and Greatest

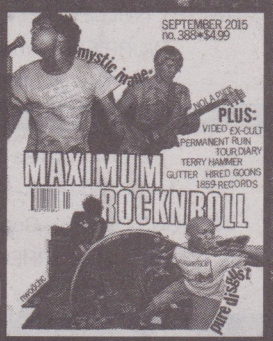
MRR #386/Jul '15

FLESH WORLD from San Francisco, Portland's PISS TEST, Philly's YDI, Reno's WRECKS, Here to Be Heard: The Story of the Slits documentary, PDX rockers BITCH SCHOOL, Russian post-punkers SIERPIEN, Australia's Homeless Records, photos from our worldwide MRR Presents shows in May 2015, and London scene report.



MRR #387/Aug '15

SHEER MAG from Philadelphia, São Paolo's CADAVER EM TRANSE, Madrid's JUANITA Y LOS FEOS, the singular mind behind BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS / GIORGIO MURDERER, France's reunited NO-TALENTS, Stockholm's DATA CONTROL, and reflections on growing older in punk from Bob Suren and the VICTIM PARTY, plus photos from Boston's Smash It Dead fest.



MRR #388/Sep '15

MYSTIC INANE from New Orleans, Texas's VIDEO, Memphis's EX-CULT, DC's PURE DISGUST, Toxic Reasons' manager and first wave SF punker TERRY HAMMER, HIRED GOONS from Canada, Greece's GUTTER, 1859 RECORDS, and a PERMANENT RUIN euro tour diary.

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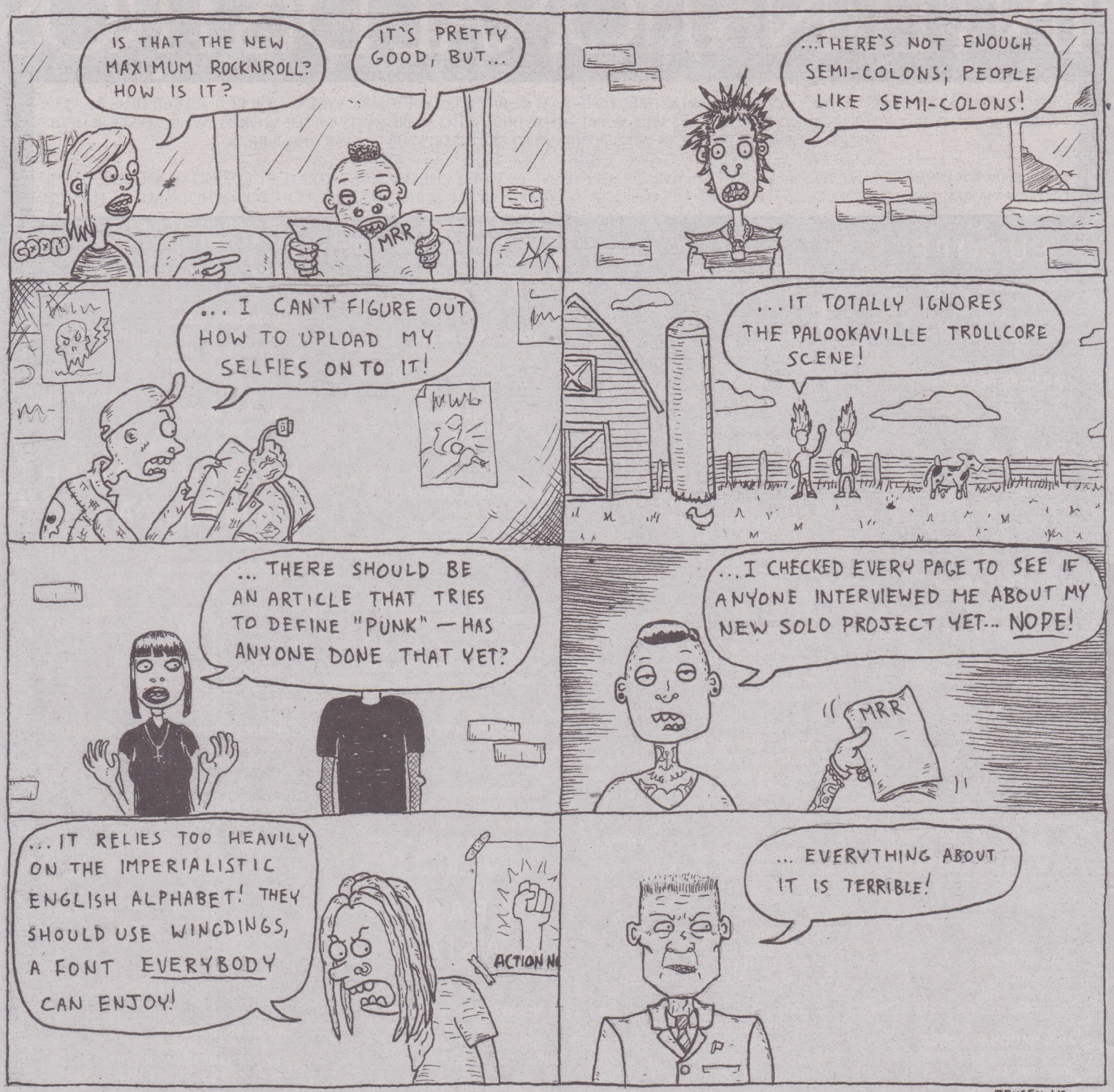

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760, or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

On August 28th, over a dozen cops with automatic weapons and a K-9 unit raided Rumah Api (an anarchist social center in Kuala Lumpur) during a show. The cops seized all of the musical equipment, two computers belonging to residents, a smart phone, artwork, and books, claiming they were searching the building for weapons or explosives linked to terrorist action. Rumah Api is a long-running all ages, collectively run venue with strong ties to the punk community. They host the local chapter of Food Not Bombs and provide a space for meetings, band practices, and shows. The venue contains a printshop, an infoshop, a record store and a radio station.

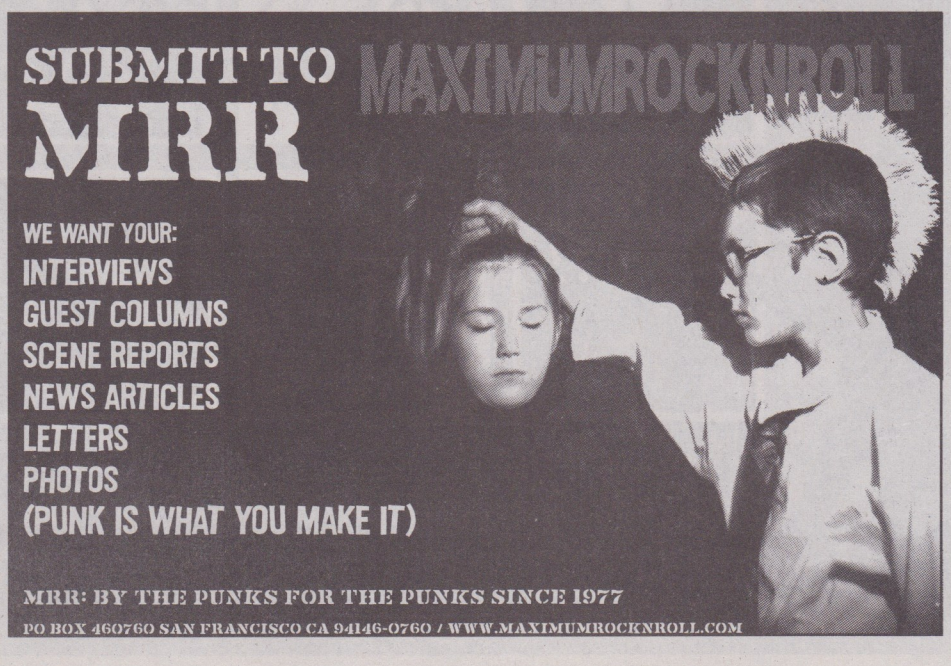
Over 160 people were arrested and most were detained for three days, including punks visiting from the United States, Germany, Spain, the Philippines, and Indonesia. While in custody, arrestees were interrogated about their relationship to Rumah Api and pressed for information on Rumah Api's alleged links with terrorism. Two attendees are now facing court charges and could have to pay large fines and serve a prison sentence of up to twenty years.

As a result of the current political and economic instability in Malaysia, the government is clamping down on any action or lifestyle that deviates from the status quo. When you enter Rumah Api, the following greets you, stenciled onto the wall:

> *"Rumah Api is not a membership organization that you can join up, but part of a larger movement of DIY punk culture and anti-authoritarian resistance. Don't follow leaders or look for a club to join. Get involved in your own way; be aware, make your own actions, and take a stand against the oppression that keeps you down. We have no wish to lead a movement, but [to] be just a small part of a large and diverse anti-authoritarian community."*

Rumah Api is asking for solidarity from punks all over the world. If their ethos resonates with you, consider helping spread the news of the raid. Throw a benefit show in your town and send them the money to support an ongoing legal battle. "Mutual aid is as much a law of animal life as mutual struggle." More information at rumahapi.weebly.com.

Brian Galecki sent us the best mail of the month: photos from Dumb Fest (see them further on in the mag!), a bunch of demo tapes, and this flyer. We love receiving punk care packages, especialy ones that contain shit we can decorate the compound with. Write us!



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The Siege Fire "Dead Refuge" LP
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Cloud Rat "Qliphoth" Tape
Decades/Failures "G00DBY3" LP
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Upcoming... The Elsinores "New Forms" LP, Asid Bateri / Class 7", Tentacles "Ambivalence" LP, Virgin Flower "Absence of Essence" Tape

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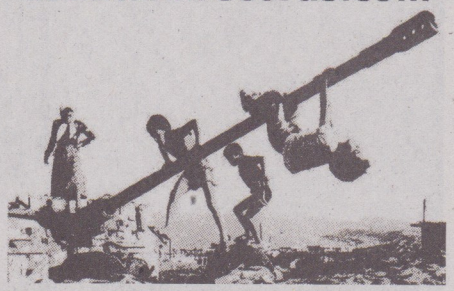

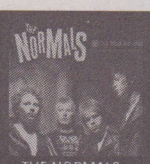

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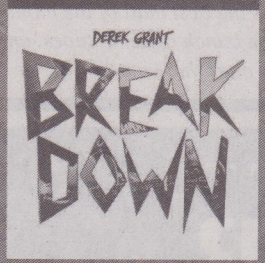

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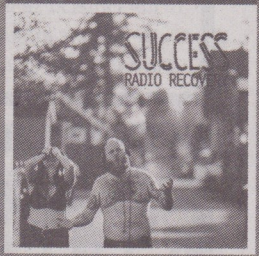

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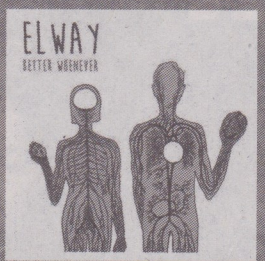

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COLUMNS

This is a music column, not a "my life as a punk" column, but regardless of that, I'm usually very conscious of only inserting myself into my writing in anecdotal ways, more often than not to connect threads of seemingly-unrelated topics or to briefly put statements and ideas into context, if only because I'm one of those reserved introvert types for whom talking about yourself is generally a completely panic-inducing form of social torture. That's no small part of the reason why trying to maintain any kind of presence on social media has been a particular struggle for me lately. So much of what we know about what our friends (especially the long-distance ones) and extended community are currently doing, creatively or otherwise, is so closely tied to what we have access to through a screen. I'd started to realize over the past few weeks that attempting to process the constant noise of social media, while not necessarily actively engaging in it myself, was triggering this weird, irrational envy by nature of the fact that it's easier than ever to compare your own accomplishments to those of the people in your social networks when they're being presented to you in real-time, as opposed to periodic phone calls or letters passed through the mail over the course of several months.

There's a reason that this is at all relevant to this month's introduction, really. Rather than projecting my insecurities about all of the shows I'm not playing because of all of the bands that I've been unsuccessfully trying to start onto people whom I truly care about and want to support, I've been moderating how often I choose to have information filtered to me (breaking myself of the habit of constantly checking up on things as a nervous reflex), as well as being more intentional about how I choose to engage with a punk community of which I often think of myself as being a below-the-radar participant. Specifically, coming to terms with the fact I don't have to go to three shows a week in an effort to put myself out there and remain visibly involved if it's just going to make me anxious and I'd rather just stay home to work on my more behind the scenes projects (like, say, writing this column). The downside to all of this is that while the break from all of that social and information overload has helped me get my shit together, it's also made it more challenging to find out about and keep up with new music. Do you want to tell me about the noise-pop band just starting up in your town that I'd probably be psyched about, or trade mixtapes of female-fronted post-punk deep cuts? Get in touch with me, seriously!

I'm really glad that the pipeline of long-lost subterranean post-punk and untrained mutant pop bands from far-flung towns in the early-to-mid '80s hasn't completely dried up yet. You know, the ones whose recorded legacy exists only as home-recorded tapes wrapped in cut-and-paste photocopied covers and small-run, self-released singles. Dutch trio CATASTROPHE BIZARRE put out a cassette in 1982 called *Melodien Für Schöne Stunden*, which their label Limbabwe has made available for free in a digital capacity on their website, and will be of utmost interest to all of you fellow scholars of gnarled, anarchic art-punk racket. The early records of fellow Dutch rabble-rousers the EX are one natural point of reference for the staggered female vocals (from guitarist Zip), barbed wire guitar scrape and sharp angles cutting through "Entertainment" and "Furniture", while the slow-burning, methodical rhythmic repetition and dude-raving-at-the-microphone (courtesy of drummer Mieke) on "Oh Lonesome Me" and "Samstag in Venlo" hit some of the classic targets of the FALL as well. Like so many obscuro-DIY bands of the time, CATASTROPHE BIZARRE held it together long enough after their lone tape surfaced to contribute a handful of songs to a compilation (Limbabwe's *Alle Honden Blaffen* LP in 1983) before splintering. There's an amusing "where are they now?" mini-documentary produced by Dutch BGTV called *No Future Nu (2): Punk in Roermond* that you can watch online, where they tracked down the members of the band in 2012 (thirty years after the release of their first recordings!) to reflect upon their punk pasts. I don't speak Dutch, so most of the dialogue was lost on me, but there's some killer archival footage of early basement rehearsals that transcend the language barrier. A mandatory download if you find yourself gravitating toward the wing of Crass Records-style anarcho-punk with more of an experimental, free-for-all post-punk messthetic rather than, say, the D-beat/spiky jacket faction. (limbabwe.com/downloads/catastrophe-bizarre)

Maybe it's a symptom of the notoriously polluted waters of the Cuyahoga River (which has caught on fire multiple times), but Northeast Ohio, and Cleveland in particular, has produced a completely staggering number of flipped-out post-punk and cracked weirdo-pop groups who have perfectly mirrored the post-industrial decay of their urban environment. It's a cohort that, of course, includes PERE UBU's wobbly post-punk theatrics, and their drummer Scott Krauss also split his time with NEPTUNE'S CAR, who recorded one single in 1980 that was tilted toward a strain of wiry, Midwestern egghead pop that slightly predates the likes of the EMBARRASSMENT and GREAT PLAINS. The knotted, elliptical guitar work on the A-side's "Baking Bread" lies somewhere between TELEVISION and the more arty side of MISSION OF BURMA, with guitarist/vocalist Doug Morgan (who was in Cleveland's severely underrated Lou Reed-worshippers the HUMAN SWITCHBOARD for a spell) doing his best nervous Tom Verlaine yelp. On the B-side, "Lucky Charms" is power-pop turned inside-out, underpinned by rubbery post-punk bass and some hyperactive guitar rave-ups with the slightest hint of jangle, sort of like the FEELIES covering the NERVES. Soul Jazz Records put out this really great compilation LP in their *Punk 45* series this year called *Extermination Nights in the Sixth City! Cleveland, Ohio: Punk and the Decline of the Midwest 1975-82*, including all of the usual suspects that you might expect (the aforementioned PERE UBU and the HUMAN SWITCHBOARD, the ELECTRIC EELS, ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS), and while NEPTUNE'S CAR didn't make the cut, that just means that they can be your nice little Buckeye punk secret for at least a little bit longer.

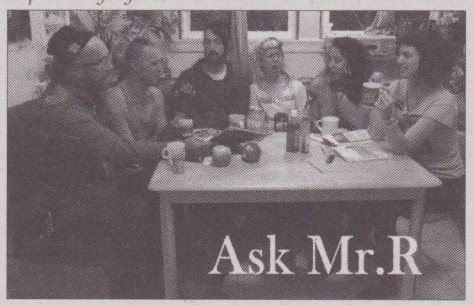
All of the demos and tapes that I've been spending the most time with lately seem to share the same attention to the twin guiding principles of minimalism and angularity laid down long ago by the post-punk advisory committee (UK DIY division). GAUCHE are a modern day Washington, DC dream team, with members of PRIESTS, NEONATES and FLAMERS (among others) combining forces in a veritable mind-meld of off-kilter, contorted genius. Multiple female voices overlap in roundabout patterns and repeat certain lines as insistent mini-manifestoes on their *Get Away With Gauche* cassette, from the haunting chant of "*I know I can't survive like this*" in "Pay Day," which dissects the inequity of our modern systems of labor, to the dual declarations of "*don't build it if it can't fall*" and "*we pay the price*" that punctuate "High Rise" along with some of the most jagged, staccato guitar this

side of vintage Gang of Four, who were similarly skilled at knocking out fiery class war anthems that you could still dance to. Evoking riot grrrl within the context of modern female-dominated musical projects is always sort of a risky (and typically lazy) proposition, but reverberations of the incendiary, primitive spark that was central to so many of the bands historically linked with riot grrrl and its aftershocks (think HUGGY BEAR or DC's almighty SLANT 6) can definitely be heard in the stripped-down punk tension and impassioned calls-and-responses of "Copper Woman" and "Boom Hazard." Buy it now or regret it later. (g-a-u-c-h-e.bandcamp.com)

New noise from my ex-home state: Austin, Texas' POLIO CLUB have their gaze fixed firmly toward the rich history of fractured, art school-warped post-punk clatter from three or four decades past. An eight-song cassette simply called *Polio Club Tape* appeared this summer, with the soft-spoken vocals and low fidelity, bass-propelled minimalism at the center of "Poison the Well" and "Phases and Faces" almost passing for degraded demos from an alternate universe YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS with a live drummer. There's a slightly different take on the early '80s Rough Trade-oriented sound on "Mercury Retrograde" with its skittish percussion and shadowy male vocals intersecting with joyously raw female shouts at the forefront, suggesting the shambling kitchen-sink approach to post-punk experimentation that the RAINCOATS fully embraced in their *Odyshape/Moving* era. The droning, low-fidelity sprawl of "Eastern Medicine" is centered on some stripped-down, tom-heavy Mo Tucker drumbeats and dramatic Nico-esque intonations that reimagine POLIO CLUB as the VELVET UNDERGROUND with the hindsight of all of the moody, literate post-punk bands that ultimately formed in their wake. I've spent the last month or so completely bewitched by this tape, and I feel like a lot of its subtle charms defy description here, but needless to say, I'm more excited about this band than I have been about almost anyone else I've heard this year. (polioclub.bandcamp.com)

Back in my other former stomping grounds of Western Massachusetts, Feeding Tube Records has just reissued *Shitheads in the Ditch*, the 2014 OSR Tapes release from New York's all-female cubist noise wranglers PALBERTA, this time in LP format. Ani, Lily and Nina each rotate between guitar, bass and drums, combining totally loopy vocals (sometimes from a single voice, sometimes with the trio ecstatically shrieking in unison) with scratchy, strangled guitar lines and choppy spin-cycle rhythms, while simultaneously maintaining an almost disorienting sense of spareness and space. The minimalist, atonal no wave lurch of "Bring Your Friends to Dine" and "All the Way" makes me think that these ladies might have a few SCISSOR GIRLS and/or ERASE ERRATA records in their collections, but they're equally likely to careen right into KLEENEX-like shambling post-punk territory, sometimes mid-song in the span of just a few seconds (the frenzied "Superstore" being but one example). Much like the SHAGGS, PALBERTA sound like they exist in a completely non-linear orbit of their own creation, but while the Wiggins sisters' falling apart at the seams avant-pop was the result of a total lack of exposure to the typical conventions of popular music, Palberta simply just don't give a fuck about the way that things are supposed to be done. Infinitely weirder (and more wonderful) than any current bands full of self-proclaimed "weird" hardcore boys. (palbertapalberta.bandcamp.com)

Send me letters and music! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA; Digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com; radio shows for your listening enjoyment: expresswaytoyrskull.com



I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an opinion column though. (And if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the "punks" and the "punx.") Text a question to 510-585-HELP (510-585-4357)! Apparently you can also call that number and leave a message like a weirdo, or just send a regular assed good ol' fashion email to: askmrr@mail.com. Oh, and post script, if you are sending a question that is time sensitive, let me know so that I can get you a timely response!

Dear Mr. R,
Once a rapist, always a rapist? Can people change and be forgiven? This isn't a question about whether I should go see a band. But it is a question about if I should try to make a show get cancelled.

"Once a rapist, always a rapist?" Yeah, definitely. For clarifying purposes, though I suppose I do think people are capable of changing their future behaviors, you cannot take back that horrific action, and you absolutely cannot take back the violation and the emotional trauma you have inflicted on another person. You cannot become *not a rapist* anymore. For defensive rapists lacking the motivation they may need to hold themselves accountable (whatever that may entail for their particular situation), they can think of this continuous labeling as being the same as an ex-user continuing to refer to themselves as an addict after many years of sobriety. It is important to be aware of your past mistakes, and the motivations behind them. It is important to remember what you have been capable of, and to not just expect time to pass and heal the wounds you have left behind without taking the time to listen, learn, and seriously reflect on what the fuck happened and why.

As to whether or not this person can be forgiven, that is up to all the people affected by this situation: victims, communities, consent enthusiasts, humans, etc. Should you go see this person's band? I know you're not asking, but in case other people wonder if they should be going, I'd say: if the band's set is entirely dedicated to the acknowledgement and opening up of a dialogue about rape culture and the ways in which the band has/does/will contribute to it, then, yeah sure, feel free to go and be a critical witness. If you feel like forcing their set to be about the same things, yeah! You should go do that! Should you try and get the show cancelled? That's probably a better idea. We could stand to be way more discerning when it comes to who we allow to have microphones and access to platforms. We won't go to shows if the band sucks, but we'll show up hoping they "play stuff of the first album" even if the guitarist has been publicly outed as having been involved in numerous assault situations. It feels as though we are perfectly comfortable maintaining the culture of the "cool guy pass."

Historically, punks have had a far more difficult time calling out and holding responsible people who the scene has determined to be cool, than they will with someone who is only a punk of regular social stature, not standing on top of cred mountain in the coolest band or a record label or whatever other thing we seem to be willing to treat as more important than the voices and experiences of the people around us. The more we let people play the show, the more we contribute to this being acceptable behavior. I know it can seem like hard work to get something shut down, and there is always going to be some apologist blowback to contend with, but even if it doesn't work, and the show still happens, more people will become aware of a situation, and, hopefully, will feel more comfortable talking about it in the future, which is actually pretty important too.

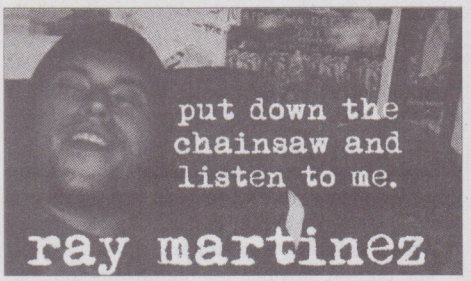
Dear Mr. R,
If we get really app rich, can we still be punks?

I'm pretty sure it depends on what you mean by "punks." Like, I'm sure you can still go to pool parties at Fat Mike's mansion and not have to worry about it, but some of your punker friends might be afraid to look you in the eye in public. For some of them it will be because you hang out with Fat Mike, but for many, the association with punks and money is very troubling. Though people spend a lot of time trying to justify the *amount* of money in their possession at any given time, the real problem here is the inferred proximity to capitalism and greed (not to mention a clear inability to absorb any of the important information your records spent so much time trying to convey to you). If you were wallowing around in a gutter somewhere and came upon one hundred thousand dollars, you would have a very noble discovery story to get you out of any trouble. Maybe people might even assume you stole it, which is also totally fine. But what are you going to do with it now? Who are you going to give it to? In what ways do you support the system in order to have it and also to spend it? Who is being helped? Who is being hindered? Answer your questions honestly, and align

yourself appropriately. Ask your friends and if they say you're not a punk anymore though, you have to turn in your leather jacket and go buy yourself an island for banishment purposes.

Have you guys gotten a chance to read the revolutionary and majestic list/poem resource "Your Options Are Limitless: A Polemic" written by E. Conner and Beck Levy? I know it has been referenced probably twenties of times in this magazine so far, but if you haven't gotten a chance to spend time with it, rekindle your love affair with having choices. Find it at fvckthemedia.com/issue57/poetry or feel free to contact me at the info below and I will mail you a paper copy to your real world address. It's very important. Photocopy it and have copies at your merch table.

While you're writing or hanging out on the internet, like always, send in all of the pressing and non-pressing punk questions in text form to 510-585-HELP. Send in email form to askmrr@mail.com.



"Nicknames are the most essential in life, more valuable than names."
– Chespirito

I'm sure you noticed that I changed my column header this month. And that I also changed my name. Yep, that my real last name—and you didn't even have to buy my book to find out what it is.

Chosen names and identities are something I've always been really intrigued by. In punk we often get completely ridiculous nicknames as ways of shorthand identification. Mez from the 2040 House becomes Mez 2040, Justin from the Chinese Telephones becomes Justin Telephone. Sometimes they carry on for years afterwards. The Blottos haven't been a band for what, a decade? But we all still know who Heather Blotto is. Sometimes the names have mysterious connotations that you might not want to ever learn about cause they just sound cool. Like Eric Apnea.

I haven't really talked about it a whole lot in this column, but people still ask me all the time about my stint as coordinator of this magazine and what happened. It doesn't really matter what happened, but a surprisingly common question I get is if I regret anything about be a coordinator. I know people are really asking "Are you resentful about moving across the country to do the magazine only to get fired?" Absolutely fucking not. It was one of the most amazing things I've ever done, and I'm really proud of doing it. I do however regret one thing about being a coordinator.

I regret going by the name Ray Suburbia.

Shortly after I stopped coordinating, shitworker extraordinaire and all around tight friend, Julia Booz and I had a conversation about my name. I was still doing some book reviews and she asked me, straight up, to send in a review I did under my real last name. We then had a correspondence conversation about chosen names, and identities in punk.

Punk is such an amazing thing because it allows for so much freedom and reinvention. You can be one person your whole life, but start a new band, move to a new house, adopt a new name, and have this chance—in some weird way—to redefine who you are. Or at least you want to be. Or don't want to be. Old names can be cast aside like dead skin in a desire for reinvention.

I have a lot of names. A lot of identities. To most people, I'm Ray. To my mother's side of the family I'm Raphaelito, since I share the same name as my father. To my father's side of the family I'm R.J., for the same reason. At my job, I'm Raffi, because there was already another Ray working in the kitchen. Since I started writing for *MRR* in 2003, via regular Carbondale scene reports, I've been Ray Suburbia in these pages. The same name I used when I was in Chinese Telephones and It Burns. In Autonomy, though, I go by my full name, Raphael Jose Martinez.

All of these are me. Or aspect of me. Identity is a strange and fluid thing, and punk (especially) allows us to have fun with it and play with it. It's easy to talk shit about Ben Weasel or Fat Mike, but it definitely feel a little weird to say things like "Ben Foster is an asshole," or "Mike Burkett can eat shit." It's a little more personal. Punk gives us freedom, but also security. We can choose to hide behind our names and identities, or use them to deflect the stones and arrows flung.

It seems that years back, people outside of outsider/radical cultures didn't really get this idea, that you could just change your name and your identity and decide that you want people calling you some strange, obviously made up name—and demand that they do. Social media has kind of changed all that. People are now up in arms about Facebook demanding that people use their real names online. It's honestly surprising to me how quickly the rest of the mainstream world became accustomed to having these fluid identities—though I'm not surprised in the least about why they would want to.

It's fun. It's safe. It allows for an honesty and freedom unfettered by self and the kind of self-censorship born out of the fear of social reprocussions.

I had a conversation once with Cristy Road about our punk names. And we talked about visibility as POC in the punk community, especially the pop punk community, which is hella white. She made the point that she didn't really feel the need to have her given name because her art is deeply about being a POC queer woman (and the serendipity of Road being both the anglicized version of her name *and* a Green Day song didn't hurt either). I never really had overt politics in my art and I started to question whether or not I owed it to other Latino punks to show that we had space in the community.

Right around the time Autonomy was starting (we were practicing weekly/bi-weekly for five months before we ever played a show—I recommend more band do the same.) I watched the documentary Martin Sorrondeguy made, *Mas alla de los gritos* and I *really* started thinking about visibility. After watching it I changed my Facebook name to my full, non-anglicized name, Raphael Jose Martinez.

The amount of messages I got about it was actually really surprising. Not just the standard, "Whoa! So you do have a real last name!" type things, but a lot of, "Wow, I guess I never realized you were Latino." You know, the kind of stuff more uptight and self-victimizing people like to call "microaggressions." While I think the idea of the microaggresions is complete bullshit and self-defeating and the top of a slippery slope down towards policing all actions by anyone, ever, the experience of changing my Facebook name did make me realize the importance of visibility. While I think a lot of identity politics has taken a very sharp, and scary, turn to the reactionary/conservative right in the past decade or so, I still have no choice but to believe in the power of being able to identify on a deeply personal and cultural level with someone else, especially in the punk community.

So that's when I decided I wanted to use my birth name in Autonomy. Also, not going to lie, it was an aesthetic one. Autonomy has always been a serious project in presentation and work ethic—we leave the fun for the shows and the personal interactions with people. As a group we all agreed that no one was to use "punk names." If you wanted to be a part of the group you had to put your actual name online. The only exception that was made was for one member when he decided he was going to go to law school. We didn't want to hurt his chances at school based on art/lyrics, especially considering the collective would go on without him in it.

But when I got the job at *MRR* I didn't want every random punk around the world knowing my actual full name, so back to Suburbia it was.

In hindsight, I completely regret it.

First off, Raphael Martinez is a much harder name to look up online that Ray Suburbia. It's like John Smith, pretty much. Second, I really wish I had been more visible as a punk of color. It was a shortsighted and selfish decision. Third, starting up *No Friends* has given me the chance to do what I should have done in the first place, put myself out there and help be a part of showing that there is an incredibly diverse world of Latino punk and punks out there.

For a while I felt like I was stuck as Ray Suburbia. But then again, I do like playing around with identities. I like to be able to be Raphael Jose Martinez and talk about obscure/irrelevant Italian pop punk and hardcore, but also be Ray Suburbia and dissect political theory. For a while I think I tried to keep them separate and try to balance these two aspects almost as different people. Not quite, but not too far from that idea.

And that's bullshit.

Life is all about dualities and facets and aspects. I refuse to believe that there's a singular whole truth. An all-encompassing state of being. If there was then why do I love to watch *Hated* and still think that G.L.O.S.S. may be the most important new punk band of the past 10 years? Nothing's mutually exclusive, yet everyone does

have to draw a line somewhere.

Personally, I'm drawing the line at worrying about identity. I don't care about it anymore. I'm living a pretty good life these days, and I couldn't give a fuck about how anyone perceives me, or labels me. Do what you wanna do. Throw your shit on me. I'm still gonna be weird and loud and on my own trip.

RIP, Ray Suburbia.

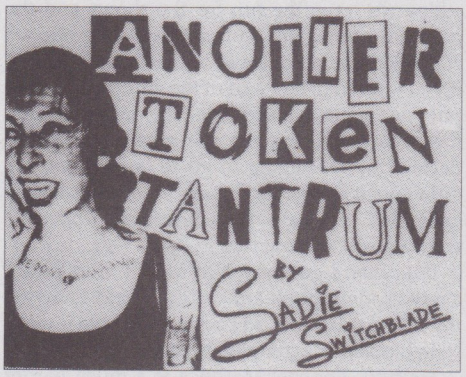
ENDNOTES:

1) Much love to Julia. I cribbed some of our conversation directly for this column.

2) Pick up a copy of *No Friends* #1 while you still can. We sold over half of the first printing in about two weeks. Once it's gone, it's gone for good. Still looking for help with distro around the country / world. You can order it at nofriendszine.com

3) Chicago has some fucking amazing shit going on right now: Bruised, Angel Lust, Rash, Staring Problem, Carbonleak, Ufux, and *Consumable Waste* zine are all blowing my mind right now.

4) The Puterbaugh Sisters are the funniest goddamn comedians in the city right now. They're moving to LA in January, so catch them here while you still can, and catch them there when they land.



"FTP, I H8 them all"
—Tigress

"Fuck. Fuck. Fuck the American Dream"
— Walls of Jericho

Hello loyal dirtbags and bootlickers! I'm lying here on a flaking leather couch in Cincinnati, Ohio, getting some much needed downtime, with a RAINCOATS LP twirling away on the turntable and half my bandmates reorganizing t-shirts while the other half start a new band in the basement with our road-dawg Mirce and kind host Dylan. (I've just been informed that it's called NEW YEAR'S EVE. So far it sounds like the MODERN LOVERS. It's good!) I've been trying to piece this column together here and there while we're on the road, so forgive me if I seem meandering and all over the place—it's because I am, dude!

We are about halfway through a six-week U.S. and Canada tour and it has been an overwhelming and inspiring trip so far. After playing what amounted to three kickoff shows in the northwest we made the ten-hour drive to Boise, Idaho to play with one of my current favorite bands, TWAT TRAP. To me they are the perfect punk band. Everyone in the band is a teenager, for starters. They all dress very punk and have perfect hair and makeup, but their own individual style, like how some Troll dolls have electric guitars and zebra shorts while some have rhinestones for belly-buttons. You know? One of their songs is about "being sad at Taco Bell." They cover "Kill A Commie" by GANG GREEN. Their bass player couldn't make the gig for some reason so they just played as a three-piece: drums, one guitar, and the singer, Emily, who performs with a glint of lightning in her eye while she high-steps around the room like a venomous spider. Their guitarist Hallie has a total DGAF attitude like "Hey, I guess I'm playing this guitar, I know these songs are good as hell but I don't really care if you are watching or not." Get their CD-R *Queer Army Knife Fight* and support the new generation of punks!

Another excellent and seemingly unknown band we've played with so far on this tour is CONETRAUMA from Iowa City, Iowa. We had to weave our way through mazes of corn and unrelenting sorority girls but the harrowing trip was made worth it by this tight three-piece (the other thing that was worth it was the sign on a store just outside of town that said "WE HAVE DECORATIVE CONCRETE BLOCKS." *Pull the fucking van over, y'all! Let's load up!!* Also I think DECORATIVE CONCRETE BLOCKS is maybe a good band name?!) CONETRAUMA is straightforward fast punk with snarling, pissed off vocals delivered by someone who sounds totally in control of her anger. The music reminds me a lot of the PIST—listen to the song "Flesh" and tell me it doesn't give the opening track on *Ideas Are Bulletproof* a run for its money.

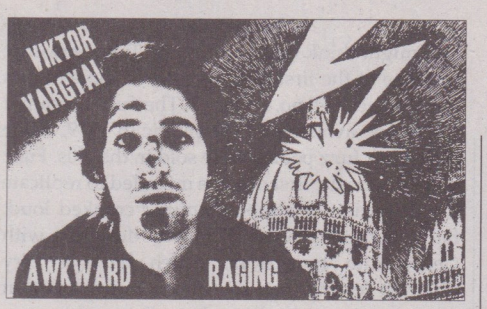
CONETRAUMA play punk that is made irresistible by its simplicity. Their singer/guitarist is aggressive but poised, their drummer hits fucking hard, the bass is holding it down, it's all just so good, exactly what you want out of a punk band when you're three beers in and everyone's laughing and heckling but kind of on edge and just ready to fucking go off. I really hope that CONETRAUMA lasts long enough to make it to their first proper release because they are too good not to! Also props to this band for playing fast and for playing "The Punk Beat"—you know the one I'm talking about, kick, snare, kick-kick, snare, repeat. The beat none of the "cool" bands play anymore but that will always be the best and most punk beat, in my opinion!

I've gotten some good cries in for sure, particularly during our Chicago show with COCHINA, TIGRESS, the BUG, and CCTV. I was so overwhelmed by the outpouring of people who made it to this show that I had to go to our van, Jean Claude Van Van, and collect my thoughts, feel my feels and have a little cry. I am a lucky girl and am grateful as hell to be where I am today. I am so glad I didn't kill myself as a young queer and that I get to be a support person, or "possibility model," as Laverne Cox puts it, for young queers now. Goddamn. Punk rules. Where the fuck would we be without it? But I digress. COCHINA were absolutely one of the best bands I've had the privilege of seeing on this tour. They command a crowd with grace and fearlessness. When I saw them in Chicago their singer, Monica, spoke about racism and her family's forced assimilation into whiteness, how as a kid she blamed her parents for not teaching her Spanish but as an adult she understands that experience as her family trying to survive within the context of white supremacy. Fronting COCHINA, she's learning to write songs in Spanish. As typically happens with me when anecdotes involving mothers are retold, the emotion pooled up in the back of my eyes and spilled out the sides. Such a powerful band to see.

Unfortunately by the time this goes to print, COCHINA will have played their last show, as their guitarist Spooky is moving to Europe. I first met Spooky at a show my old band played in Chicago in 2012 with a lot of boys who didn't make me feel super comfortable. She didn't know me yet but took me aside in the kitchen to say kind and supportive things to me, that really stuck with me and made me feel like I could keep going. Then she grabbed the mic during BOILERMAN's set and sang that PROJECT X song everyone covers but obviously she left it all on the floor and did it better than any boy ever did. I'm not really going anywhere with this other than to say that COCHINA is a great band full of badass warrior women and I look forward to whatever bands they do next.

The biggest surprise for me on this tour has been TRIAGE out of Toronto, Canada, who we played with in a tiny basement in Ottawa. They play crushing, headbang worthy punk, kind of like a cross between mid-tempo DISCHARGE and the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. You may remember their guitarist, Sadie, as the trans woman who headbutted the singer from CHOKEHOLD's fist a few months ago because he was spewing racist pro-cop garbage and she wasn't having it. Yeah, It's Like That. Everyone thought it was me but it was this bitch and I let me tell you, reader, she is hard as nails. Yes, there is room for two trans women named Sadie in this scene! Watch out! Anyway, the TRIAGE intro kicks off with a straight-up JUDAS PRIEST riff, catchy as fuck, and ends with that D-beat cacophony thing with the drummer piledriving the cymbals and everyone in the room waiting for the stick-clicks. Then they're off to the races and you'd better be holding on to your ass! Seriously TRIAGE was so fucking good, I couldn't get enough. Plus they covered "Society's Victim" which obviously took it to that next level. I got their tape and hopefully it is at the bottom of a box of crap somewhere in the van and I will uncover it when I execute my painful dismount from this delirious hellride called tour!

Any-fucking-hway, that's all I got in me right now besides Taco Bell. It's hard to find time to write a coherent column on tour so I'll just cut myself off here. My message from the frontlines of punk is that there are a ton of good bands out there. I also want to say that WALLS OF JERICHO are the sickest band of all time, "(Fuck The) American Dream" is my favorite song of all time, and Candace Kucsulain is my only hero and I hope that one day she powerlifts to my band. Mosh to TIGRESS, support women in hardcore, FEMMES ACTIVATE THE PIT IN 2016. Bye!



No Form's self-titled debut LP is a great record. I like it, I listen to it a lot, it is recommended and would be on my top anything of recent time. Although it's not interesting nor is it exciting—it's entertaining just like a detective novel released with a hard cover that indicates this might be more than pulp. A novel that Paul Auster might write which delivers the same familiar flavors due to an unerring recipe that is good enough to trick you into believing this is more than top quality tale telling. Never judge a book by its cover. The yet undiscovered fields of punk and hardcore that are waiting to be explored, populated and exploited are still out there. We have not reached any borders so far that the genre's attributes would dictate to its doers or the makers of this sonic mania have not out-done themselves either so far. We have not heard everything yet. Still this always-expanding noise profile (that is punk) sometimes is really great in gathering together and bringing back to the music's epicenter all those weird influences that have been scavenged on marginal fields of high energy, low budget music.

No Form is also a focused finder. I adore the carefully picked sounds they have collected and pasted into their sound collage. Although this is just a collage of occupied and deported noises and all of them already existed in forms even before they were originally juxtaposed together on this record. Nothing is pulp here and there is no glue sticking out anywhere. It's a great and confident work of art by those who know very well what sounds good and how to work perfectly with these elements but there is as much thought behind the music as it loses its interesting charm, because after all, it's just as exciting as playing with Lego instead of messing around with plasticine.

That is a risky place where No Form went and thanks to their well-kept self-confident balance, they have succeeded at performing what they wanted to but they did it so consciously and effortlessly that the risk itself has evaporated. These are all forms, formalities, and rules. Everything is right where it belongs. It sounds as an end form of a transformation, like reaching a destination only to see that the travel itself would have been the actual fun; like reading Tarkovsky movies' plot summaries on Wikipedia instead of actually watching them and letting the pictures slowly take over your mind.

Punk is confusion. Its core activity is the attempt to try to understand not only the surrounding world but itself as well. These pages were used by dozens of people writing and thinking on recordings that were also put out to get closer to understanding what the fuck have we done? It sounds like No Form has an answer but their presentation of knowledge lacks pre-dated curiosity; it lacks the effort to naively wonder and conquer the unknown; as if they have hiked up to the hill but dropped no sweat; in their world there is no place for a question mark. It's a closed case. They deliver it, they know it. It gives everything for the listeners and spares nothing for imagination. This leaves a meta-noise in the ear as if nothing new has been created here but they made music of music. Even though there are myriads of things happening within the songs, the music itself sounds static, no movement is present, weird is not crazy, unnatural is not a mistake. Take their lengthy jam, a saxophone infused homage to Siege's legendary B-side. Originally that was a free form cacophonic jam that happened to be on the B-side of a proto-grindcore record. It pushed infant noise a bit closer to art, showing that even clueless punks can expand their limits. No Form is keen to include saxophone as a suffering voice to color the soundscape, regarding Siege: this all was a mind blowing surprise.

There are no surprises here. This is the price to pay when a culture closes its gates and gets over-established; it creates an arsenal that could be accessed and used by participants of the genre. It's not (more) progression or new(-er) sounds that No Form lacks but the environment of whatever. To know all the rules is good so you can be free to choose which to break and which you fancy following. Although in punk you are better off when you forget all rules (but if you learn a few, then you'd rather learn and break all). This is where the average contemporary European bands are terribly disappointing. If you dig into the historical sounds of hardcore you can find out that non-American bands were way more interesting than the gateway classics. Today it would be really hard to sketch a brief list that concludes the best European bands. It feels like nothing is happening, because bands go for sounds other people might want to hear, not what they want to play. Because the musicians themselves are those other people and instead of thinking on what is missing from the musical spectrum, they focus on what they liked so much, in other words, what's the definition of approved good. This circle of art tames the risk act-by-act and we end up with something like No Form, if we are lucky. If not then here comes the hoards of bands who are chasing a standard which, even if ever reached, would give them nothing but mediocrity at best. It should be another story—which right now I would be too uneducated to tell—how European sounds have changed to mimicking styles. How everything got painfully unified. Or it could be that I'm not looking deep enough, but as the tendency shows, European bands are in the spotlight when their scenes have various original voices that click together. From the distance and the lack of an archive where I could dig into, I can't know if, without a scene as strong as the United Kingdom's today, would No Form also be this apparent? It's a fact that the UK scene is in the spotlight, there is such a canonized term and all bands like DiE, the Flex, Perpex Flesh, No, Good Throb, Frau, and Lowest Form differ from each other. As most of the Spanish bands differ from each other as the German ones. It's the bubble that makes a scene more than just a geographical pile of bands. Although it's interesting how rare it is when a band stands alone with their music without a geographic placement of their sound. When their sound is not the sound of the mid-west or Japanese noise or Italian craziness or Finnish brutalism or Swedish melodies. Environments create contexts that dictate both the need for and the forms of expressions but when these rules are individually broken then you got an amazing scene.

There is also the context of time and technology. When scenes existed in bubbles there was no stake in producing any sound because no one thought it would matter outside their territories and nothing mattered too much that came from the outside world. Now that everything is opened into a whole, everybody is so aware who's watching them, so instead of looking forward, bands look around and only within the protection of a hyped scene's bubble do they regain the confidence to again do whatever they want because then they already have gained general attention. Even the beautiful failures of reinventions have disappeared. Since those who wanted to reproduce a sound and failed with it to gloriously succeed with their disintegrated noise that was intended to be a rip off sound, now they could easily hit up huge archives of tabulators and learn songs dot by dot; know pedals and watch tutorials without taking the time and their brain to figure new things out while wanting to decode something they like. The stories of lost and failed have ended since everyone gets their right answers. This is the real tragedy, because as much as it interests us how Polish punx sonically cope with their micro-reality it is not that interesting when we hear them perfectly replay American hardcore songs from the '80s. It was interesting as hell when this reproduction was rather a reinvention with national features added, let it be political, cultural, and sociological. When failed enthusiasm was mixed with clueless regional sounds. The Italian uncontrollable and unrestrainable tempo that sprung out from collapsing squats and EU's Arse screaming louder than music, Wretched's dizzy chainsaw guitars that speared out in your headphone like fragments of a pipe bomb; the Latin rhythm that is still in every Spanish band, the robust beast what Una Bèstia has created and let loose from its chains; and how French people couldn't even bear each other so Mopo Mogo had to go solo. The unique thing about these bands is that whatever they were, they were it by their own terms. They have created their sound and treaded their own path on the sonic map.

No Form reveals everything and leaves nothing for imagination. Many of its references point to bands who operated on the margins of punk and are tagged with a post prefix, which used dub-ish rhythms in their slow-paced music so the sharp guitars could have more space to gruesomely echo through their own platform. For example Pop Group's opening track on Y is a seemingly simple track that hides its real self and you have to really listen through or among the layers to encounter the craziness and real power of the

song. When No Form is playing mid-tempo, they are not only super fast, when they are super fast they don't escape, rather they run with muscles not in paranoia. It feels like No Form is able to see (or to put it more romantically—to hear) what's great in these bands, but they don't understand why they are great. Because these bands are not obviously great. If you show a Suicide record to some grumpy person their reaction will be "anyone could do this." Even if it's true that anyone could do this (meaning, playing dumb songs on boom boxes and synthesizers) their songs are just gonna be dumb and not magically dumb; beautifully dumb as for some better minutes life is. No Form is absolutely punk, they don't make me scratch my head as much as Warum Joe when I have to figure out what is really punk in them, because something is. This means they are true to serve their form and smart enough to know how to spice it up with interesting flavors that are alien to the genre. But they are such good chefs they don't make a messy plate, everything is meticulously balanced out. They are here to hail.

Industrial bands like SPK, Cabaret Voltaire, and Throbbing Gristle used the noise of a new industrial era and turned it into music to mirror our environment. Their subjects the exact opposite of their objects just as Come and See used the horrors of war to make us want peace. No Form is using noise because for them it sounds cool and it tells us that they like something but a manifesto doesn't back it up, so it feels like accident porn that goes without anything edgy to say other than its shock value. Does it mean that No Form's noise is less valuable? Well, if you enjoy hearing them, then your answer is no.

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As of today, it seems pretty normal to everybody to have a lot of effect pedals and gear everywhere on stage. But there was a time, back in the '50s and '60s when it wasn't. If you had a guitar, a tube amp (the transistor revolution hadn't exploded yet all over the world) or a PA back then, you were the king of the world. I'm not even addressing the drum kit, which was a real luxury.

Sixty years ago, when the blues was ruling the world, before the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and such acts would burst "popular" music to the ears of the whole globe, you'd only have your six-string guitar, your tube amp combo, and your instrument cable. That was it. If you go back to the old electric blues record, you'll figure out that most of the effects the players tried to give to their music came from their fingers. I must say that I like it better. Back then, it was straight and raw, without artifice.

Later on, with the rise of the technology, the late '50s and '60s saw a huge rise of guitar-oriented effects. Some were mostly designed for studio purposes, but were quickly turned into transportable versions for live use. We'll talk about effects this month.

Tape Delay

Tape delay was one of the first, if not the first, guitar-oriented effect. You can hear it in a lot of old songs, especially some of the Elvis material. It consisted of a big metal box with some sort of a cassette tape in it (either with a plastic enclosure or not) and was designed to copy and repeat a note or chord from the guitar providing a sweet echo to the player. With only a few adjustable parameters it became widely popular. Probably the most famous was the Maestro Echoplex, which was used by Jimmy Page numerous times across the Led Zeppelin discography. Watkins also came out with the Copycat if you want to seek some other models. Roland also made the RE-201 Space Echo which is a favorite of Brian Setzer of the Stray Cats for the amazing slapback it can produce.

Tape delays are amazing, and have a real sweet and lively feeling, but are terrible to deal with because the tape often break or skips, or even runs out of the grooves, and it's all very heavy and fragile. On the rise of the transistor, solid-state designs would quickly kick out the old tape delay machine until they recently resurfaced, now that everything vintage is seen as the most authentic option.

Amp Integrated Tremolo

Back then, most effects would come integrated to the amp, especially on combos. There weren't that many stand-alone units designed. Tremolo was probably the biggest of them all. If you're not familiar with tremolo, it's the level sound just going up and down. Just listen to "How Soon Is Now" by the Smiths, it's full of tremolo, or "Rumble" by Link Wray, which is the perfect demonstration of the use of an amp integrated tremolo. Fender became famous for a power tube-based tremolo design that was notably recognized as a quick power tubes burner, but still provided a really amazing pulsating tremolo in the end. Also, it has to be noted that, for some reason, Fender usually named tremolo as vibrato, and vibrato as tremolo, which is absurd, because both are very different effects. What they would call tremolo on a guitar (which most of the time is the whammy bar) was in fact a vibrato.

Spring Reverb

Most of the spring reverb units came amp integrated, and still do to this day, but a few stand-alone designs exist on the market. Spring reverb was made popular by the surf music trend from the '60s, with the most notable act being Dick Dale. Want to sound like Night Birds? Well, then get yourself some spring reverb. The spring reverb is just a metal tank with springs inside that let part of your signal go through and replicate the reverb of a room. There's not much to rant about the spring reverb. It's a solid yet efficient design that still hold strong to this day. It's been replaced by a few electronic devices but people tend to like the real deal nowadays.

Fuzz Pedal

You might think that your lovely Tube Screamer was one of the first designs to ever come out on the market. Well no, it wasn't. The Tube Screamer was made available to the public in 1979, while the earlier fuzz pedals were sold in the '60s. Fuzz pedals were the first devices intended to replicate the distortion of a tube amplifier cranked loud. Back then, they were all mostly designed with Germanium transistors, which have a very different feeling than the silicon transistors that manufacturers use these days. Fuzz are a very simple yet efficient design that is made to destroy your guitar sound. Yes, I said destroy. The most notables incarnations of the germanium fuzz pedals are the Tonebender and the Fuzz Face, the first made popular by Jimmy Page and the second by Jimi Hendrix.

Wah Wah

Ever heard the intro of "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)" by Hendrix? Well, that's the sound of a wah pedal. The wah is essentially a filter that lets some frequencies pass while sending some others to die to the ground. You can move the spectrum of that filter with your foot. That's again a pretty neat design that came from an engineer, who was simply trying to tweak the equalizer section from an amp. This effect was commercialized under two different names between the UK (the Vox Clyde McCoy) and the USA (The Crybaby), even though they were made by the same company. The wah pedal is one cool effect; you can come out with plenty of fun ideas with it and it's especially great for soloing. You've probably heard it through millions of songs.

Treble Booster

Probably the most underrated effect, yet one of the most frequently used, is the treble booster, and specifically the Dallas Rangemaster that was really popular during the '60s. Not yet offered as a pedal but as stand-alone unit, you've probably heard this one on all the classic recordings from that era. Eric Clapton supposedly used one around the time of John Mayall's *Blues Breakers* LP, in combination with a 1960 Gibson Les Paul and a Marshall Bluesbreaker to create his tone, but other notable users include Brian May of Queen and Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath. The sole purpose of this effect is to push the high frequencies of the guitar signal along with the amp driven harder into distortion, thus having a more lead oriented sound, cutting through the mix better.

Here, I have detailed some of the most famous effects that were used through the '50s and '60s, and that's just the tip of the iceberg, to say the least. The '70s, along with the rise of the transistors and other electrical components that were soon replacing the tube technology, had a major impact on the birth of a lot of other foot actionable effects. Then during the '80s and '90s, effect pedals were soon replaced by rack-mounted effects. The 2000s have seen the rise of digitally processed effects, and nowadays the trends tend to mix everything, with a firm tendency to get back to some fancy and overpriced pedalboards with foot actionable pedals that combine both digital and analog technologies. I still tend to

think that the '50s had the best tone with just a few effects and good players who weren't trying to rely on some pedal tricks, but those were the days, and the time is now. There's more to follow, addressing the wild, wild world of effect pedals.

PS: The Stress SS *Fest* EP on Adult Crash records is so good, it's insane. Fans of Swedish kängpunk should go crazy about this one.
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Who is Jo Coone?

He was the only person I hadn't previously encountered who lived in the "Yellow Ghetto" in Cleveland when I moved in. The others I'd met two or three years prior when I'd come through Cleveland to visit friends and attend a punk fest or show. Before I left Australia to move into this house, I remember seeing a photo of my four future housemates hanging out on the front porch and looking out to the street toward whoever took the photo. My attention lingered on Jo, wondering what he was like and if we'd get along.

Last night (Monday, August 4th) was all about Jo Coone, a 22-year-old chain-smoking recently-broken-vegan (but-still-vegetarian-for-life) resident of this house that holds shows twice a month next door to Now That's Class. He also plays instruments in, gee, I don't know, five or so new-ish Cleveland punk bands in the incestuous scene that centers around the bar next door to us. He comes from a new generation of Cleveland punk, a big group of friends who are just looking to have a good time together making crazy punk music to get them by in the contemporary Cleveland they're living in now. Just like the infamous cult '00s and '90s Cleveland hardcore punk scene pushing out from the bands that preceded them in the '80s and those bands coming out of the proto-punk '70s scene.

This show was initially organized at the bar for a punk band touring the east coast out of Duluth, MN (a small city between Minneapolis and Winnipeg) called MIND CONTROL. They have a catchy contemporary punk hardcore sound that is alright to listen to online and more interesting and crazy live. Good hooks, the singer running around full of energy, small breakdowns for fun but not enough to send it into stale bro-core country. With y'know, some sort of weird time changes in between or stops and starts and spinning guitars. Alright, I lied, there were no spinning guitars. That would have been neat though. It was really good stuff, but still, something was missing. The lack of genuinely crippling out-of-control heart and mind, maybe? They wear their mean punk attire but seem to stand around awkwardly and shy and don't look that bad or mean at all. They could be tucked away safely in the tidal wave of contemporary punk bands surfing that same style. Many bands have since jumped on the bandwagon, now flooding the country and have washed the sound out from what it originally was, soon to be forgotten when this trend eventually drags its arse back out to sea. Plus, their tape art is just plain boring. Try again. You guys are young and doing good stuff in your local scene from what I can tell from talking to you, so you're heading in the right direction!

Anyway, weren't we talking about Jo Coone?

This show got set up and three local supports quickly assembled. It would be VANILLA POPPERS's first show. DIPSHIT were still fairly new having only played a few shows, with a set of probably six-minutes maximum each time. And CRUELSTER, who have been around longer than the others and are slowly making a name for themselves and their own little individual groove in this Cleveland scene, avoiding being washed away with the tide like so many others. Although in the Cleveland punk scene this doesn't seem to happen much anyway, a lot of bands have their own individual characters that are jaded or deranged enough in some way or another to make a mark no matter how big or small. Back to the point. These three supports all had Jo Coone in them—one on guitar and two on drums. (On a side note, you should also check out PERVERTS AGAIN, another of his bands. They have an LP coming out in the upcoming months on Paul Schlacter's long running Cleveland label Non-Commercial Records.)

The day of the show arrived and a few people shared the event on facebook. But still, it's all a bit of an insular circle so despite the attention we were all giving it, it wasn't getting very far and the event page said still only less than 50 people were attending. I compare that to Australian shows where events for shows will boast a minimum 100 people attending and will only get about 40 people through the door on the night. In the hours before the show, all the focus turned to Jo and his upcoming epic quest of three sets in one night. We posted photos of him in the event comments and suggested he have his own special drink for the night, do some bartending and other stupid remarks.

It started late, at around 10:30pm, but it didn't matter because both the newer bands played less than 10 minute sets. VANILLA POPPERS were on first. I can't really go any further without mentioning that I'm in this band, so I can't describe it from the point of view of someone in the audience. I'm 25 and have never been in a band before. I wanted to for a long while but couldn't keep my attention focused enough to get any better at an instrument beyond the basics. (Also, a bunch of other reasons that could probably be viewed more as excuses.) I didn't know Jo yet but on my first day in Cleveland he, Steve and Drew asked me to front their band. I expected to feel nervous singing live but never really did. Maybe just a twinge as the first chord led the way into the opening song for the set. I did what I'd seen other vocalists do time and time again: write out a set list, wait for everyone else to set their gear up, test the mic and when everyone else was ready to go, start the set.

Since the initial naming of the band, we'd joked we would do poppers for the first show. Which we did. It was dumb but a good laugh and small bonding experience. Handing the tiny bottle around in our house before we left for practice a few hours prior, then at the practice space and then on the low bar stage right before we kicked it off. There was a surprising amount of people there for a Monday, around 50 at its peak. But as soon as I started singing I didn't even fucking care if anyone was there or not, if they liked it or thought it was complete rubbish. I enjoyed it more than anything else (maybe just as much as I enjoy writing). No one moved around, I didn't care. It was just great to be jamming live with these three other people, performing these songs that we'd all worked on together. Shit, what a great time. I can't wait to do it again. I wish I'd done it a long time ago. We burnt through five songs and finished with "Public Circle", a cover of the COMES. I tried finding the lyrics for the song so I could learn to say them properly in Japanese but couldn't, so just made them up. Although all members of the band had input, Jo wrote the initial riffs and structure and we all took it from there. Between the songs, one person in the crowd would start chanting Jo's name while a few others laughed and joined in the chanting. The set ended and most people cleared out of the bar to the patios out the front and back to smoke and chat while they had time before DIPSHIT started.

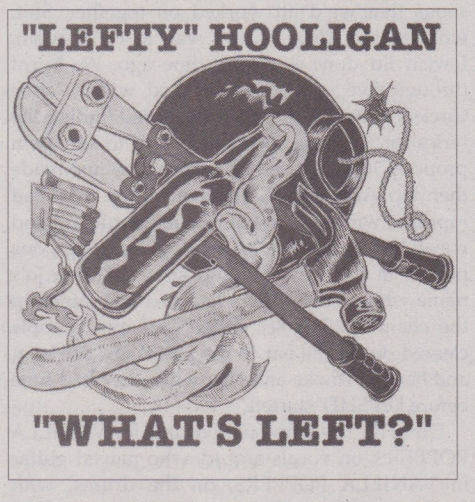
DIPSHIT has Drew who drums for VANILLA POPPERS, on vocals and Jo, who played guitar in VANILLA POPPERS, on the drums, with Shamus and Kevin filling in the blanks between. Their short songs and hardcore punk fusion was definitely in the vein of a Cleveland sound similar to that of INMATES, NINE SHOCKS and the like. Jo's drumming to keep up with this fast shredding music is almost primitive and on the verge of completely falling apart. When I first saw this band, as much as I enjoyed the other aspects, the drumming caught my attention the most. It was wild and dense. People were getting into it a little more this time around, nodding along to the music and grinning uncontrollably as Drew pogoed into the wall of people who had come a lot closer to the stage than they had been for VANILLA POPPERS. There were a couple more shout outs to Jo during this set.

MIND CONTROL were on next. I've already spoken about them so won't go into it much more. Their crowd seemed to be about half the size it was at the start of the night but more concentrated in a sense that people there were now pushing each other, marching around and bumping off bar chairs. Not too full-on but respectable for a touring band no one had really heard of before they booked the show. Plus, despite what I said previously, it was still better than your average punk music.

Locals CRUELSTER ended the night. And it was chaos! Well, not in typical Cleveland tradition of fireworks and anything not-nailed-down flying all-ways across the room. But a wave of misfits swayed back and forth with the brave

storming around in between and jumping off the stage. Singer Mike threw himself around in a crazy fit of demon possession, spazzing out and rolling around on the floor. It was a mess and the vibe was electric as bodies piled on top and over others with limbs flailing. The crowd chanted Jo's name and it got louder as we clapped along. A speech was made in his honor and then he did a fucking drum solo while we all cheered. What a fun time, and one of the best I've seen in Cleveland in the three months been here… but that could also because I'm usually quite drunk.

I walked outside after the show ends. Jo was drenched in sweat standing around with a group of people, smoking. I asked him for a cigarette, mad some conversation about eggs (our favorite topic) and then, proud of myself for having only one drink that night, escaped back next door to sleep.



"With the outbreak of isms, like socialism, anarchism, imperialism or communism, sunspots start to multiply on the face of the golden orb. God refuses to enlighten the Reds! Scientists forecast an increase in sunspots due to the arrival of the beatniks and pacifists from certain countries such as Italy, France and Scandinavia!"
—Police Chief [played by Pierre Dux]
Z, directed by Costa-Gavras

I was into the Thor Heyerdahl/Kon-Tiki saga when I was as a kid in the 1950s and early 1960s. For those interested, Heyerdahl was a Norwegian adventurer with an Indiana Jones flair who, as a sailor, fought the Nazi occupation of Norway during the second World War. After the war, with a background in science—ethnography, biology, and geography—and as a proponent of cultural diffusionism to account for the spread of human civilizations, Heyerdahl famously built a large raft out of balsa reeds from Peru's Lake Titicaca and sailed it from the western coast of South America to the French Polynesian island atoll of Raroia in 1947. His idea behind the Kon-Tiki raft and expedition was to demonstrate that ancient peoples could have made long, arduous sea voyages, using the primitive technologies of their day and creating contacts between diverse, widely separated cultures. The subject of a number of documentary books and films as well as re-creations, not to mention a variety of fictionalized depictions, Heyerdahl's *Kon-Tiki* experiment did demonstrate one thing quite clearly:

Just because something can be done doesn't mean that it was done.

There is little support in the scientific community for Heyerdahl's theory that cultural ideas let alone trade goods, let alone people, made the journey from pre-Columbian South America to Polynesia. Anthropologists in particular are dubious about the notion that ancestors of the Incas colonized the Polynesian islands. His various projects were exciting, spectacular, and attention-grabbing, which tended to confuse the issue between what could have happened, and what did happen. It's a variant of the false scenario fallacy, and its common.

Right-wing videographer and "journalist" James O'Keefe made a name for himself by selectively editing videos he secretly filmed in order to supposedly demonstrate that certain public individuals and organizations were knowingly promoting falsehoods, if not engaged in out-and-out fraud and crime. More recently, O'Keefe is involved in a cottage industry that tries to prove that various bad things can happen, without demonstrating that said bad things actually did happen. So, he demonstrates that voter fraud is quite easy to commit, or that someone dressed as Osama bin Laden can easily sneak across the US/Mexico border, without actually proving that rampant voter fraud or al-Qaeda infiltration have ever occurred. Critics of left-wing film maker Michael Moore have accused him of doing much the same thing with films like *Fahrenheit 9/11*, in which selective editing, humorous juxtaposition, and bald inference are used to suggest that the Bush Jr administration knew more than they were letting on about the lead-up, commission, and aftermath of the 9/11 Twin Tower terrorist attacks.

Showing that something can be done, without proving that it was actually done, is the stock-in-trade of conspiracy theorists everywhere. Take the Apollo moon landings. It's quite easy to lay out how such lunar expeditions and landings could have been faked, without really confirming that the landings were actually falsified. Again, harking back to my youth in the 1960s, I spent way too much time worrying about who assassinated JFK—all the theories from the KGB and the Cubans to the Mafia and the CIA—without coming to any sound conclusions as to who actually did the deed. I'm certain that there's more to the Kennedy assassination then what has been revealed, although I'm also certain I'll never ever know the whole truth. There are left-wing and right-wing conspiracy theories, but by and large conspiracy theories transcend left-right political categories in pursuing their flights of paranoia. In addition, conspiracy theories often prove interchangeable with regard to their underlying structure and *raison d'être*, with that infamous international conspiracy for world domination trope easily substituting any number of key conspirators, from the Jews to the Freemasons, the Illuminati, Bolshevik communism, international bankers, the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderberg Group, the international bourgeoisie, alien reptilian overlords, etc, etc, etc.

Historian David Hackett Wallace once identified an informal historical fallacy he called the furtive fallacy, which "is the erroneous idea that facts of special significance are dark and dirty things and that history itself is a story of causes mostly insidious and results mostly invidious. It begins with the premise the reality is a sordid, secret thing; and that history happens on the back stairs a little after midnight, or else in a smoke-filled room, or a perfumed boudoir, or an executive penthouse or somewhere in the inner sanctum of the Vatican, or the Kremlin, or the Reich Chancellery, or the Pentagon. […] In an extreme form, the furtive fallacy is not merely an intellectual error but a mental illness which is commonly called paranoia." (*Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought*) The idea that certain historical events or facts are necessarily sinister, and part of some secret conspiracy, is contested by former *MRR* columnist and ex-shitworker Jeff Bale who argued that historians frequently underestimate the influence in politics of secret societies, vanguard parties, intelligence agencies, underground cabals, etc. due to the very nature and organizational methods of such clandestine groupings. Thus, groups like the P-2 Masonic Lodge and al-Qaeda on the right and Lenin's Bolshevik Party and the guerrilla VietMinh on the left actually did engage in conspiracies to one degree or another.

In the realm of conspiracy, resolving the distinction between what can be done and what was done often muddles matters. (A related topic, the often violent rupture between how conspiracy theorists view reality, and reality itself, is beyond the scope of this column.) In particular, determining the perimeters of what was done is a sometimes a daunting task. Consider the Bolsheviks once again. The Bolshevik Party was a straight-up, clandestine vanguard party of professional revolutionaries, and so conspiracy was part of its MO. The Bolsheviks participated in the 1905 as well as the February 1917 Russian Revolutions, and actively, secretly organized the armed Red Guard putsch central to the October 1917 Revolution. It is even well documented that a member of the Bolshevik central committee, a number of high-ranking party members, and a fair percentage of the rank-and-file membership had been secretly agents of the Okhrana, the Czarist secret police, in a conspiracy within a conspiracy. But I am not convinced, from the historical evidence, that the Bolsheviks were inadvertent double agents of Czarism, or that they engineered the Russian Revolution from the get-go, or that they were pulling the strings to an international Communist conspiracy as far back as 1789. And to argue that the Bolsheviks were part of some worldwide Jewish conspiracy masterminded by the Elders of Zion is sheer lunacy.

Me, I tend to fall on the anti-conspiracy side of things whenever analyzing history or current events. Back in the day, when my friends and I were '60s New Leftie wannabe revolutionaries trying to figure out our politics but still barely scraping together the change for our next lid of bad weed, we joked that our checks from Moscow seemed interminably delayed in the mail. Indeed, the international Communist conspiracy has been

a central hysterical trope on the right in one form or another, serviceable in all sorts of situations, gradations and permutations. Decades later, when I got to know some ex-Maoist types who'd been around the fractious New Communist Movement in the 70s, I learned that the joke for them was their checks from Beijing never seemed to arrive. Nowadays, the rightwing canard is that progressives and Leftists in this country are being funded, and hence controlled, by George Soros. That's Central Committee General Secretary Comrade Soros to you.

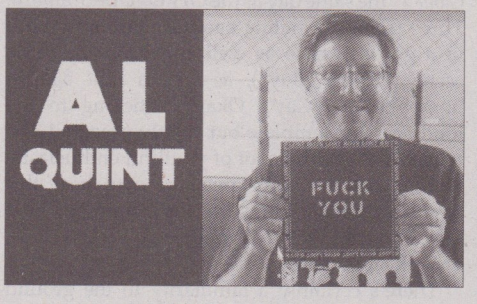
In a less flippant take, a common lefty conspiracy theory has it that the CIA imported heroin in the 1970s and that the FBI manufactured crack in the 1980s in order to specifically crush the Black Power/Black Liberation movements and to more generally suppress Black people in America. I don't doubt that the proliferation of heroin and crack did, in fact, accomplish these things, but more as an afterthought rather than as a purposeful conspiracy. I think that the international drug trade is powered by a number of players with a variety of motives; everything from the good old-fashioned profit motive to drugs-for-arms type geopolitics, with plenty of opportunity and opportunism to go around.

And yes, there are conspiracies all the time in capitalism, everything from knowingly manufacturing and selling dangerous products to lobbyists secretly buying the votes of politicians. But by and large capitalists are pretty up-front about what they intend to do with their wealth and power. They organize quite openly in business associations and political parties, proudly found schools of economics and think tanks, and put forth their plans for running state and economy freely in the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*. When neoliberalism came to power in the late 1970s/early 1980s, the elections of Thatcher in England and Reagan in the United States were preceded by a neoliberal onslaught of propaganda and activism openly calling for, among other things, deregulating and financializing the economy, rolling back the welfare state, crushing organized labor, and privatizing the public realm. Neoliberalism proceeded to do just that with the election of the Republican president Reagan, coming to fruition under the Democratic president Clinton with the ratification of NAFTA and the abolition of welfare. There has been little hidden, or clandestine, or conspiratorial about the capitalist ruling class's open class warfare against the rest of society carried out under neoliberalism.

Acknowledging the existence of a social class with common interests based on ownership of the economic means of production, even recognizing that the social class in question attempts to run things through owning most of society's wealth and property, is not the same as tossing around dubious conspiracy theories. But I'll leave the basic *Marxism 101* for a future column. I'll conclude with a quote from Zbigniew Brzeziński, that: "History is much more the product of chaos than of conspiracy."

(Copy editing by K Raketz.)

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... My first novel *End Time* (AK Press, POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682), or *Fim* in Portuguese (Conrad Editora, R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil), is out of print. My second novel is in the works. I'm archiving past columns, and publishing current ones on my political blog, leftyhooligan.wordpress.com. My personal blog isgamatiasz.wordpress.com. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@icloud.com.



UNDERRATED/OVERLOOKED

I thought about writing how right-wingers love to use the term "politically correct" as a justification for denigrating other groups of people—this is happening a lot with Donald Trump and his braindead acolytes, in particular. Blatant racism, misogyny, Islamophobia, etc. The whole "everyone's just too danged sensitive" trope. Yes, I could have written about that but why waste precious space just aggravating myself and no doubt most of my readers. So I'll waste precious space writing about something a lot more fun.

There are plenty of bands that are underrated or overlooked. I could fill many columns with lists of those and why people are missing the boat. But this piece is about bands known to most punk fans and how there are songs that casual fans who only know the "hits" might be missing out on. That's especially true if they're tucked on B-sides or are what are known as "deep cuts," to use radio parlance.

I'll start with a couple of B-sides. The SEX PISTOLS *Never Mind The Bollocks* is one for the ages, of course, but a couple of the flipsides of their singles hold their own with anything on that album. "Did You No Wrong" was the B-side of "God Save The Queen" and is a taut and catchy rocker with a great Steve Jones riff and Paul Cook's sturdy drumming leading the way. "Satellite" was on the flip of "Holidays In The Sun" and is one of the most crushing songs the Pistols ever did. Heavy as fuck, a lot thicker sounding than the earlier demo versions and the engaging "I love youuuuuuuu" chorus. A monster of a track.

The RAMONES' early records (I'm counting up through *Road to Ruin*) are as overplayed as the Pistols. That doesn't make them bad but I don't think I need to hear "Blitzkrieg Bop" or "I Wanna Be Sedated" all that much anymore. "Go Mental," tucked on side of two of "Road To Ruin," is another matter altogether. Something about the way Joey goes "mentiillll" and the simple but stinging guitar lead that wraps up this underappreciated surger.

Sandinista by the CLASH is a three record, 36 song sprawling mess. It would have made a killer single album if the better songs had been cherry-picked. The best of the bunch is "Up In Heaven (Not Only Here)," a hook-laden rocker sung by Mick Jones that would have fit in well on "London Calling." Tasty guitar lines and subtle organ shadings, fading out in dreamlike fashion and then returning with a jolt. A total earworm.

A less-appreciated DEAD KENNEDYS song is "Terminal Preppie," from *Plastic Surgery Disasters*. A great put-down of obnoxious college students, with some zany horn charts perfectly complementing the frenetic arrangement. This one's a perennial play on Sonic Overload's annual "Salute to the Students" show I do at the start of each school year.

One could argue the SAINTS are underrated in general but it's likely that anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of punk has at least heard "(I'm) Stranded" (the first import punk single I ever bought). I didn't discover the brilliance of their second album *Eternally Yours* until the mid '80s. "Private Affair" is a scorching two-minute rocker riding an irresistible Ed Kuepper guitar line, while Chris Bailey's vocals (sung in two different vocal styles) bounce back and forth between the speakers before joining in unison for the conclusion. Several bands have covered it over the years but it still remains somewhat overlooked, methinks.

I was never much of a fan of the Joe Wood-era TSOL records, especially when they devolved into a tedious hard rock band. *Change Today* at least had a handful of good songs, the best one of which was "It's Gray." It has a vintage TSOL arrangement. Although Wood's vocals have the overbearing Billy Idol-ish tone, the musical surge more than compensates for it. Interestingly, it's a vastly reworked version of a song from Wood's late '70s band DER STAB that has few similarities beyond a handful of lyrical lines.

After Rikk Agnew left the ADOLESCENTS, for the first time, they brought in a different guitarist, Steve Roberts, for a swansong 7", *Welcome To Reality*. "Losing Battle" is one of the other tracks and it kicks ass, holding its own against a lot of the songs on their first album (it's no "Black Hole," of course). So does "I've Got To Run," one of the B-sides of BLACK FLAG's *TV Party* single—kicks ass, that is, riding a motherfucker of a Chuck Dukowski bass line and a squealing two guitar mesh.

Staying on the west coast, everyone knows FLIPPER's "Sex Bomb" and "Ha Ha Ha" but they didn't always play at a languid pace. "Living For The Depression," off the *Generic* album, is a one minute and twenty-five second stomper, ending with the hearty exhortation "I'm not living life to be a REAL FUCKER LIKE YOU, COPOUT." "The Game's Got A Price," which originally appeared on a flexi-disc that came with the Boston 'zine *Take It* in 1981, is a bit of a novelty track, a greatly sped-up version of the song, as if it had been recorded at 33 and played at 78. It also appears on their *Sex Bomb Baby* singles collection. A more conventional, nearly eight-minute version of the track appears on the live *Public Flipper Limited* album.

One of my favorite 7 SECONDS songs is "Wasted Life Ain't No Crime." It sounds as though it could have been an outtake from "Skins Brains and Guts" or "Committed For Life." One version showed up on the *Old School* album, taken from a 1983 demo but I think the one that appeared on the *We Got Power: Party or Go Home*

compilation is even better. By the time they get to the "mosh part," following a sick bass run by Steve and a hearty 1-2-3-4, it makes me want to start a circle pit in my den.

Finally, BUZZCOCKS had a boatload of memorable singles but they would often experiment a bit on the albums. "ESP," from their second album *Love Bites*, is a numbing song that beats your senses into submission. Pete Shelley plays the same guitar signature for over four minutes while the other instruments provide the melody underneath and the song has a two minute fadeout. Repetitiveness never sounded so great.

DON'T OVERLOOK THESE

Mike from Beer City sent a nice big package of new and recent releases and there's some quality stuff for sure. First up is a deluxe package of TOXIC REASONS' *Independence* album, retitled *Essential Independence* and tucked inside the DVD box is the album, appended with 7" tracks and a live set from Berkeley Square in 1981 (that set came out on vinyl awhile back), plus a DVD from a 1999 reunion. This is the only full-length to feature original vocalist Ed Pittman. His Brit-inflected, sandpaper growl is the perfect accompaniment for the Reasons' scrappy 'n catchy punk. Songs like "Mercenary," "Killer" and "Noise Boys" are pure, fist-pumping anthems. While they were eventually more or less aligned with the Midwest hardcore scene, the REASONS' sound had a strong UK punk inspiration. I always liked the grittier-sounding single version of the reggae/punk song "Ghost Town" and that's here. So is an unreleased version of "God Bless America." The live set from '81 has a handful of songs that never got recorded and hold their own against the album tracks. Finally, the DVD features a rowdy 1999 reunion of the 1981 lineup and they tear through a loud 'n sweaty set, including a few songs off "Kill By Remote Control." Accompanied by a booklet with essays, reminiscences, etc. Essential, indeed.

The man called Bitty is probably best-known as being the vocalist for WARTORN but he's been moonlighting lately in DEATHWISH, handling the bass duties along with vocals. After a 7" EP awhile back, the band's debut album *Out For Blood* has been unleashed. Hot'n'heavy Motörpunk played at a healthy (unhealthy?) clip. Smoldering riffs, gut-bucket drumming and it really kicks hard when they pick up the pace on songs like the title track, "Six Bullet Roulette" and especially "Flat-Line." It's a very simple formula and DEATHWISH prove quite adept at it. Something to get the skull rattling.

Next up is the OFFENDERS' *Live At CBGB's 1985* album. I'm not a fan of live albums but I did see them on that tour and, as I said a few columns ago, they were the real fucking deal. They sound as though they're about to fly apart but these guys could play their asses off, especially bass player Mikey Donaldson. The two CD version adds on six live tracks recorded in Austin in 1982 that has so-so sound quality. Disc number two is a reunion set at Emo's in Austin from 2002 involving all four originals (actually, JJ was the band's second vocalist) and they play with spirit and gusto. The double LP package on Southern Lord is more essential to novices but this is worth a listen or two. Due out at the end of November (on "Black Friday").

"The CLITBOYS???!!!" Yep, the band forever immortalized on the MEATMEN's song "Punkerama," really did exist. They were a three-piece from Milwaukee and Beer City will be doing a reissue of their 1983 *We Don't Play The Game* 7" the same day as the OFFENDERS' album. Three teenagers railing against conformity both in a general sense as well as within the punk scene ("Slogan Boy"), as well a rant against homophobia ("Gay's Okay"). Sticking to the loud and fast template but tightly-executed and played with a whole lot of youthful enthusiasm. The remaster sounds great—nice to hear this again, without a bunch of surface noise. (Beer City, PO Box 1759, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1759, www.beercity.com)

There's certainly a familiarity to the ground covered by ANNEX on their debut album *Después De Vi*. Melodic goth-tinged punk/post-punk although there's less shimmer and a lot more bite in their sound and Nikole's shouted vocals also add a lot of punch to the proceedings. There's a bit of a surfy feel to the guitar lines, underpinned by strong bass lines and drumming. This isn't something to listen to in a dark room with the shades drawn—well, you can do that if you want, but there's a certain amount of emotional uplift in these songs. Gripping and energetic. (Mass Media, massmediarecords.com)

Fuckin' IVY—how *dare* they break up right before they're supposed to play Boston, only I find this out when I get to the show. Ah well—at least SUDOR played a smokin' set. So IVY leave this world with one final four song 7", *A Cat's Cause, No Dog's Problem*. More hard-driving, psyched-out, blown-out thumping punk/hardcore/garage, along with surrealist lyrics. Got all that down? It's a heady mesh of a sound that simultaneously fucks the senses and kicks the ass. Once again, got all that down? A fine follow-up to the best album of 2014. (Katorga Works, katorgaworks.bigcartel.com)

MYSTIC INANE's third 7" *Ode To Joy*, is another primo platter from one of the best punk bands N'awlins has to offer these days. The title track isn't the Beethoven song, you chowderhead. It's pretty joyous in its own way, though, strutting and bashing its way into your psyche but doing it in an off-kilter way. These guys sound like INSTITUTE jamming with LUMPY, if I had to pin it down a bit. A haunting, melodic guitar signature jolted along by a thick bass-line and abrasive vocals. That's also the case for "Grease Inna Hair," while the aggression level goes up a bit for "Pervert In Society." Punk music that stretches the parameters a bit. (Negative Jazz, negativejazz.bigcartel.com)

ANCIENT FILTH continue to mesmerize with each new release. The latest, their first new recording in a year and half, is an eleven-song tape. The recording quality is a bit sharper and so is the music. Speedy hardcore with sound snippets leading from one track into the next. "This American Lie" gives you a pretty good idea of their worldview but they do more than rant and rail. There's a search for humanity, for empathy, for hope, working ones way through life. Punk is supposed to be music for the rejects, those who feel pissed on. Ancient Filth's music is for those people. Includes a raucous cover of a somewhat obscure DEAD KENNEDYS song, "Shrink" (from *Bedtime For Democracy*). I always say they're one of Boston's most underrated bands and that shouldn't be that case after five or so years. (ancientfilth.bandcamp.com)

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i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

Correspondences/Ragana Tour Diary: Part 1

I'm not advocating murder or anything, but I want you to imagine a world in which "real estate developer" was widely considered to be a job too dangerous to bother having—a world in which rich people who might otherwise make it their life's work to get hella paid for Flipping Properties, rezoning cities in the interest of Business or Increasing Property Values in other ways decide instead to get into tax law or stock brokerage simply because real estate developers keep getting killed so it's just safer to invest the money and privilege they already have into something else.

Because, look—the show last night was one of those shows you remember on your fucking death bed, one of those magic shows where the venue is weird and perfect, friends from out of town—out of the town where you live and also out of the town where you're playing—all show up, and you get to hug and drink beer sodas, or not, depending on whether you like beer sodas. And the other bands are sweet and loud and awesome people and everybody is pouring everything they've got into what they're playing but they're still fucking up sometimes and even though the space is small it feels like there's a lot of people there but there's still room for everybody to stand and see and even though technically you're supposed to be done by eleven you can close the windows and the last band is quiet enough—but still pretty loud—that the show doesn't get shut down and everybody gets to sit on the floor for it.

Last night my band Correspondences played at Wolff Cycles in West Philly with Ragana, Space Chumpy, and Hot Tears. I actually felt a little funny about the space because I've been working on a novel about a Nirvana tribute band that practices in a bike shop at night when it's closed so lugging our amps and stuff into the bike shop to play a show kind of felt like fulfilling my own prophecy or something. The show was upstairs from the bike shop itself in what felt like a furniture-less living room. Bands set up against a brick wall with three windows that had to be closed while we played and a single string of Christmas lights drooping across the back;

there was a worn out old rug on the floor and a bathroom at the side with a window up near the top of the wall so whenever anybody was using it the light shone out into the show. It was ramshackle and charming and then, one floor up, there was also a roof everybody went out onto between bands, one of those semi-finished tar and like grip tape roofs with no rails to keep you from falling off. And you know that thing where a ton of punks and queers who don't necessarily know each other but who also don't seem to be doing the "because of my own insecurities, I hate all you strangers who dress like me" thing that it's so hard not to do, so like, going upstairs and out onto the roof between bands felt like just as safe and cute a thing as standing in a hot room with them, everybody sweating all over everybody else, while overwhelming drone and feedback and screaming and drums made the air even thicker. Or whatever. Hopefully you know what I'm talking about.

If you don't, listen: Start a band and go on tour.

Annie Danger was there with flowers and beer soda for me from my sweetie on the West Coast via modified punk post; and so was Jenna from +HIRS+, and my friend Yehoak from twitter, and multiple trans girls I didn't already know, as wells as goths, weirdos, pervs, and queers. Even though Beyonce was playing at the same time! We had to go head to head with fucking Beyonce and we *still* had an awesome show.

I think part of the reason last night felt so good, too, was that the night before we had played basically the opposite kind of show. I mean, I don't want to talk shit—I truly do appreciate being invited out to play at the tattoo mansion in the strip mall, next to the trampoline party center near the cheap Indian takeout place, with the guy barbecuing chicken out front—but it was kind of a funny first show to jump on Ragana's tour with.

I've been such a huge fan of Ragana's music for like forever and the rest of Correspondences loves them too and when we met them a couple years ago at Smash It Dead Fest we found out that they are great people, too, and I'd been fantasizing about touring with them ever since. So I'm so stoked when we asked if Correspondences could play the shows on their tour near where we live, they said yes.

So we drove down to Maryland from Providence to play our first show with them at the super fancy tattoo mansion. Like there were a bunch of rooms where the tattooing happens, and a living room which was also a bar, and a velvet rope, and the space where performances happen had like fish tanks and expensive guitars in cases against the wall, and a bust of Chopin with a top hat on it...I dunno, man. Honestly? I feel like strip malls became the predominant form of American expression and culture a couple years after I left New Jersey—I have super fucking fond memories of indoor malls from when I was a kid, and one day I'm going to publish a novel about trans women who survive the apocalypse and move into indoor mall because stripless malls rule—so it wasn't exactly the same, but even though the mall was different, the vibe at the tattoo mansion felt super familiar to me. It was totally Rural/Suburban Very Heterosexual Metal Tattoo Dudes being Rural/Suburban Very Heterosexual Metal Tattoo Dudes and while I don't think there's anything wrong with that, it is also not the safest-feeling kind of space for me. Especially since I'm trans and I've been off hormones for two years and maybe doubly especially because I was in such a bad mood when I left my house for tour that I made the half-assed and un-thought-through decision not to bring any, like, punk signifiers: no denim jacket, no boots, not even a weird hair cut or color. So like. I was wearing a skirt from the Gap outlet and a tank top that didn't have any bands' names written on it at all, whereas all the Very Heterosexual Metal Dudes were wearing Agoraphobic Nosebleed t-shirts.

Also we played fucking horribly. We were a mess. After we played and Ragana played we got to hang out in the parking lot, though, and that ruled. They'd been on tour for like three weeks already and were totally in road dog mode, which I think helped us to get into road dog mode too. We sat on the ground behind the truck and ate hella snacks. At one point Maria from Ragana was talking about playing a different show full of metal dudes and introducing her band like "Hi, we're Ragana and uh, we make mistakes when we play." I think punk bands might make mistakes and metal bands don't? So you're only punk if you fuck up.

In other words, we found the line that separates punk from metal. It is labeled "mistakes."

Anyway, we got to hang out in the parking lot and Nikole and Maria are the best and eventually NOISEM played and they ruled but also featured more than one white person with dreadlocks, which is a bummer. After NOISEM we packed up and stayed with a friend of Emily's in Baltimore. Maybe I'll tell you more about that night next month because I want to talk more about the Philly show last night.

I couldn't stop thinking about how many white faces were in the room, inside, where we were playing, versus how many black faces were outside, on the street and in the bodegas of the neighborhood where we were playing. I mean it wasn't only white people inside and it wasn't only black people outside. But I've spent time in West Philly and the gentrification that's been going on there, for a long time, has been really hard to ignore. For a long time. I'm implicated in it and I don't get to let myself off the hook but at the same time I have this fantasy, right, this idea that what we need is some kind of vigilante assassin, because I know that as much as we like to think of ourselves as radical forces of good and resistance what we actually are, we punkers and queerdos, is a bunch of fucking pawns for these people, the real estate developers and business people who give a fuck neither about the communities that are being pushed out nor about the people and businesses that are moving in, the privileged people with the artisanal cupcake stores and the local, organic, ironic ukulele hip-hop covers by white people with clean hair.

You know?

I'm implicated in this process—and maybe you are too—because even as a white person who tries to Give A Fuck About Shit I'm part of the ongoing project of white supremacist capitalist colonialism and honestly it is comforting to me, even if it's unrealistic, to imagine that the solution is a simple string of murders. That it's really just a matter of getting real estate developers to cut it out by breaking a few eggs to make them fear for their lives. And I mean, don't kill anybody, but maybe it would help? At least a little? I guess what I'm saying is that gentrification is only one of the heads of the hydra that pulls the strings of this toxic garbage culture—or maybe one of the tectonic plates that support it—but it's a nice fantasy to think that we could cut off that one head so I could enjoy a perfect show with my friends and some bands that I love every once in a while. You know? Because god damn, dude. That show last night was one for the record books—even though Correspondences, Space Chumpy, and Hot Tears were all punk, and Ragana didn't really make any mistakes and therefore was kind of metal.

ENDNOTES:

1) I wrote a lot last month about how into this band Young And In The Way I was, and then like the day after I sent in that column, I read an interview with one of the guys from that band where he described their creative process as a kind of "rape." Bummer.

2) Even worse, I know I've talked in this column about this band Enabler that I was super, super into. They were one of the two stickers I had on the back of my laptop. (The other is +HIRS+.) I was super stoked for their new album that was set to come out this summer, until Amanda Daniels, the bass player, came out as having been sexually and physically abused by the main dude from that band for years. Century Media cancelled the album and refunded preorder money and taking the Enabler sticker off the back of my computer felt a little like the time years ago that I admitted to myself it was time to take the Screeching Weasel patch off the back of my jacket. It's weird to think now that there was a time I would have gotten an Enabler tattoo if I'd had the money, but I'm stoked I dodged that bullet.

3) In more positive news, I'm gonna see if I can stretch seven days of touring with Ragana into a year's worth of columns. Next month: two thousand words on what we listened to on the radio during a travel day driving from Baltimore to Providence! (Spoiler: it was Bon Jovi and One Direction.)

Lots to cover this month, primarily a veritable flood of killer new stuff from Mexico, so I'll spare you all the tedious life updates and get straight to the rock!

Straight out of the Distrito Federal, Grabaciones Pinche Engendro has quickly become a label to watch, and the new *La Muerte Gobierna* compilation tape only solidifies that status. Seven of the very best Mexican bands throw down some of their very best material to create what is easily the best comp I've heard this year. From the always-untouchable bleak D-beat of MAQUINA MUERTA (check out the oddly PISTOLS-esque riff to "Espejos") to the reverb-soaked hardcore punk of ASSÄSSINI (DESTINO FINAL meets early BLACK FLAG?) to the chaotic blasting punk of ILEGALO TODO (a band with dual vocals and blast beats that doesn't rip off DISRUPT? Fucking rad!) to the emotionally cathartic, almost screamo vibe of SACRIFICO, this comp is all great material and more than varied enough to hold the listener's interest. The INSERVIBLES tracks are previously released, but what the hell, they're still great ones. To top it all off, the comp is housed in a punk-as-fuck silkscreened slip sleeve with a poster insert and information sheet. See, this comp is worth buying simply based on the strength of the material, but it's also benefiting a good cause, as proceeds go to benefit the communities of Oaxaca, Mexico in their stuggle to defend collectively held lands and indigenous people's rights against the government. This couldn't come more highly recommended! (Grabaciones Pinche Engendro, grabacionespincheengendro.bandcamp.com).

ESPECIE FALLIDA have a demo out through Grabaciones Pinche Engendro as well, and it's a scorcher. The super-tough lady vocals jump out first, raw-throated shouts that almost hurt to listen to (shades of HEALTH HAZARD for sure). The music has a distinctly late '90s feel to it, short songs with plenty of tempo changes and riffs. TALK IS POISON defintely come to mind, and when they're blasting there's a strong HIS HERO IS GONE feel as well. These six songs blow by in just about six minutes and definitely leave you wanting more. Sadly, this demo is limited to 50 copies in its current iteration, so pick one up quick or hope for a repress—or ideally more material!

There are a lot of criteria by which one can judge who and what is punk, and using almost all of them one could fairly conclude that FZ-10 are the punkest band in Mexico. A bunch of decked-out motherfuckers banging out some of the sloppiest, most awesome rudimentary hardcore in the world. Certainly their *Kaötika Existencia* EP makes the case for them. Ten bite-sized tracks of total punk mayhem packed full of punk-as-fuck moments (check out that almost-kinda full kit roll that starts out "Fraude Divino", or the all-thumbs guitar leads that permeate the recording). If the DECAY covered the first MG-15 demo it would've sounded a lot like this. Please be clear, I don't mean to denigrate the band or make light of them in any way, this is exactly what hardcore is supposed to be: an outlet to express emotion and a form of music that is in no way only accessible to "musicians." This band has made one of my favorite records of the year out of two chords, one and a half drum patterns, and sheer spite. The comic book style insert is worth the price of admission alone, endless vistas of doomsday, anti-society messages and punx fucking shit up. Goddamnit, this is fucking great! Makes me want to pick up a guitar and start a band right fucking now. (Rock Svb Discos, rocksvbdiscos@gmail.com)

Portland's ERRADICT may not be the most punk band in the US, but they're pretty fuckin' punk and their new demo rips. Wall of guitar noise collides with a truly mean bass sound and frantic drumming with gross, throat-y Japanese-style vocals over it all. Tasty solos, catchy riffs ("Overload" will stick in your head for sure) and a recording that does justice to it all. Seriously, I wish the insert said where this was recorded because heavier bands need to be using that studio/engineer. The swarm of bees riff on "Voyage to Hell II" sounds so fucking great. ERRADICT have come out of the womb fully formed, with a cohesive sound that's all their own, an impressive feat indeed. I expect that new material will be forthcoming shortly. (Violent Reaction, erradict_@hotmail.com)

Finally, we have the most stupid and pointless release of the month: TOM AND BOOT BOYS' one-track promo tape! This spray-painted mess was produced for their fucking awesome two-day fest earlier this summer, and the song contained within, "Go! Go! Tom and Boot Boys" is a total classic one-minute stomper. "*We keep on punk we like / we play fucking punk / We live as punks / We hate fucking poser punks and a lot of fucking posers.*" Fuck yeah. On a related note (and the one personal bit of biz this month), I am super fucking excited to finally see TOM AND BOOT BOYS at the Fresno All Punks Go For It fest, supported by a who's who of sloppy/stupid/rad/noizy bands from all over California. I will be sure to report on the highlights next month. See you then, fuckers!

YO, WHATUP *MRR*. Welcome back to Eat, Pray, Shlub, my livejournal. I was reading an old column of Imogen's the other day and I noticed her calling her column a livejournal too, and I don't think I stole that from her, I think I came to that conclusion on my own and so did she because she and I are very similar in terms of how we process and synthesize information in the world, but also on the off chance that I did read it from her and copy her I wanted to mention that because look, there is a history of men copying women and not crediting them that I don't want to be part of and even though I'm not necessarily a man, for the purposes of holding a place in that Continuum of Shitheads I may as well be one, so like, you get it. *Whatever*.

MOVING ON. I've been eating an ice cream cone every day lately and it's awesome, you should try it. It's more expensive than getting Wellbutrin was on my health insurance but def worth it. I just feel way happier when I eat an ice cream cone each day. But two days ago after work, me and Salvatore went and got a cone on Bedford Ave which is like, the gentrification epicenter of North Brooklyn and we were sitting on this stoop and I noticed a dude in a van who was selling a bunch of crap on the sidewalk. I presumed he was on our team via Sully's Law (also known as the Shotwell Principle): "Any person selling a bunch of crap on the sidewalk is probably A Punk or at least Punk Adjacent." But then I noticed he was selling a bunch of Mammy figurines, which are those racist Aunt Jemima statuettes that racist white people collect. I pointed them out to Sal, and was like, "what do you think about that?"

And he was all "I don't like it," right as the guy got out of his van and we both found out he was a white dude with a goatee and a Hawaiian shirt! That is like, the most bad news facial hair. To quote my friend Himanshu's song WOYY "I used to want a goatee / cause nobody would coach me."

I was like, "AYO YOU FEEL LIKE A DICKHEAD SELLING THAT RACIST SHIT ON THE SIDEWALK?" and then homie was all "Not when I count my money at night." And I was like, "Oh, so you just *are* a dickhead."

Then he told me he was Jewish which I thought was weird but I got to give him a sarcastic "mazel tov" which I enjoy doing. Eventually we stopped talking and then like two minutes later he was all, "Why do you even think they're racist anyway?" in a total Wake Up Sheeple voice and then crossed his arms into this Riddle Me This b/w GOTCHA pose because he clearly thought he had checkmated me, but I just looked at him surprised and was like, "Cause they are. Are you trying to tell me they aren't racist? I don't see how that's possible." And he just kinda gave up and then this other guy with a python around his neck walked by and the Racist Sidewalk Salesman was like "Sick snake, bro," and me and Sal got up and walked away.

Well, I was totally unsatisfied with that interaction because like, nothing got accomplished and I didn't even feel good about myself for being self-righteous, which I think was the whole point anyway. I guess I wanna poll *MRR*: should I have just duffed that dude? I feel like maybe if I had punched him in the nose I would've felt better. I'm not really into fighting but maybe now that I quit smoking I'm gonna get into fighting.

I dunno, help me out here. I just want there to be real life negative repercussions for doing fucked up shit like that. Also writing this down now in retrospect I realize when he said "Not when I count my money at night," I should've been like, "Oh but you *do* feel like a dickhead right now though? Aight." So I guess maybe I need to learn martial arts for fighting, but then probably I have to go to an improv class to develop a quicker wit for insults if I'm gonna make a habit of picking fights with dudes on the street.

Please all white male victims feel free to send me a postcard about how I'm reverse racist to Colin Atrophy / 442-D Lorimer St #230 / Brooklyn, NY 11206 or send me an email at sliceharvester@gmail.com. Or send me cool mail! This month I got a bunch of issues of *Marmaläde Umluäta*, a pretty cute food zine by this person Maud who also lives in Queens (feudfood.blogspot.com); issue #2 of a comic called *Soundtrack* that's made up of these super engaging vignettes that are

about tripping or dreams but either way I like them (wesleyfawcettcreigh.wordpress.com); and some music from this dude Jim. Jim sent a CD of his cumbia group, Vox Urbana, which I haven't listened to yet (p excited to hear it eventually, though) because I don't have a working CD player and the one in my computer has nail polish in it, and also a tape by his punk band, New Doubt, which is dark jangly weird desert shit that I'm totally into (newdoubt.bandcamp.com). It rules getting a good tape in the mail, lemme just say. I'm not ungrateful and hopefully I'll get to see New Doubt on tour one day.

In non-mail cool shit news: I been real stoked on two bands, neither from New York. First is Mea Culpa from NOLA (meaculpanola.bandcamp.com) who are also playing dark jangly punk, which I've always liked but I've been extra into lately ever since my girlfriend asked me to start cosplaying as Young John Doe. It's weird, I put these motorcycle boots on and all of a sudden I'm a totally different person. Or like, I'm a slight variation on the person I already was. I was talking to Lizette from Weird TV the other day and she was like, "Lately I just wanna be a Gothic Cowgirl" and I was all "Grrrrrl, me too." Anyway, Mea Culpa are sick as fuck and I saw them play a kind of disastrous show in Brooklyn a few weeks ago but they ruled. Also they have one of the best-designed t-shirts I've ever seen, but I ruined mine cutting it into a tanktop too haphazardly so (cough, cough) it'd be pretty cool if anyone wanted to maybe send me a new one. I'm a very important punk tastemaker and a size M, though I could prob do a S.

Second is this band Popper Burns from Austin, TX (popperburns.bandcamp.com) and, look, I don't want to compare a kinda funky punk band from Texas with a drag performer for a singer to the Dicks and Big Boys because, well we all know why, it seems hackneyed and obvious and pigeonholey, but Patti Melt kinda does an unhinged rant à la Gary Floyd and Sigourney Fever's loping bass makes me think of the Big Boys funky numbers. They also have heavy Feederz and Minutemen vibes for the same reasons, respectively. All told, they're the most exciting band I've seen live in a long time and their tape didn't disappoint. Keep your eyes peeled. If they show up in your town don't miss them and if you're in Austin don't sleep. The night I saw them there were like ten people at their show but earlier in the night I had been in a boring as fuck, all cis dudes, by the book hardcore show with mad people at it. Straight people got bad taste, I guess.

Lastly, I wanna talk about my friend Denise Chavez's comic *Penis Hider*, which is about gnarly creeps hitting on her in public places. Denise has an incredible way with words and an ability to capture the minutia of what makes situations so absurd and she's just super funny over all. Her stories are drawn by Evan from Vacation whose frenetic style of art really compliments Denise's storytelling and makes the whole thing feel as fucked up as it is. It's worth checking out if you like comics by cool women and hate the patriarchy. Email her at devouryenz@gmail.com for ordering info.

If you wanna know about my podcasts or my book which just came out or my soon-to-be weird video show where I interview punks at the pizzeria, just go to sliceharvester.com. You can also read all my old columns there and my pizza reviews and other shit and blah blah blah, thanks for listening. PEACE OUT.

In my brain theater, there is usually one show playing a time. One big concept develops, usually for a run of a few weeks, and though I can listen and engage with you on any topic you like, I will eventually want to take you to the show. I care about the show. I've worked hard on it. I have hopes it could be a gamechanger.

The show this month has been the relationship between identity politics and accountability: how people pursue and organize call-outs and how this could be improved, and what lengths people will go to in order to avoid accountability for their behavior, privilege, and/or behavior associated with their privilege. I know how much people rely on identity politics to make sense of how to claim what's their due, to strive towards justice, liberation, and an accountable, conscious community. I know how important my identity as a mixed Black, disabled, working class queer femme artist, writer, advocate, healer, anarchist, and punk is to me! But here's the thing: I think that some people mistake marginalized identity for radical identity. People with privilege, for instance, cis white straight men, or cis white straight women (different privileges, mind you), think that marginalization equals absolution. As in: the more marginalized identities you collect, the less you have to worry about social and political accountability, and the less you are implicated in any injustice.

There is absolutely no way to track this or call this out, and I wouldn't want to, it misses the point. If someone tells me they are a transperson or a person of color or a person with a disability or poor, I am just going to believe them. I believe that is an important show of solidarity that I must, ethically, lead with. Then, what to do when people lie? And perhaps, the stranger question still, why do people lie about who they are? What about the Rachel Dolezals of the world, who feel that being white "just doesn't resonate with who they are" and so they choose to identify as Black? I even had a friend who for five years maintained a lie to all of her friends that she was latina, when in fact, she is white and of European descent. She finally admitted so to all of us, over email, after we left college.

What happens when people just cannot deal with their privilege so hard that they choose to actively deny it, in order avoid ongoing accountability? How is this different from the phenomenon of how people throw up their hands and whine and lash out or run away when asked to take accountability for harmful behavior? We have to heal something. One of the greatest things I have learned this year is that accountability, whether it's being accountable to hurting someone's feelings, sexually violating someone, or acting in ongoing racist or misogynist or ableist ways, is terrifying. But that's not a bad thing. Scary can be good. It could be a gamechanger. What you choose to do with fear is up to you.

If you are someone who is not used to feeling afraid (which I'm telling you is not the experience of any gender-marginalized, racially-marginalized, sexually-marginalized, ability-marginalized, or otherwise bodily-marginalized person ever), then experiencing fear in a social, personal context can feel intolerable. In fact, if you are a marginalized person, imagining that your behavior could defy the logic of solidarity and empathy and harm another person who is differently marginalized can be comparably intolerable. But emotional intolerability is kind of an illusion. With patience, you can break through to the other side. But in order for this to happen, I believe that anyone who desires to be accountable to their actions, must also be supported by someone who loves them in this process. This should not be the person or persons they harmed. People must unlearn the idea of accountability as the end of relationships. While some might end (if someone needs to take temporary or permanent space from someone who's harmed them), it can also be the start of new kinds of radical relationships, including one with yourself, dude! Ones which can create new paths toward healing, and don't let our communities fall apart when a transgression occurs.

If you identify as queer/trans/POC/poor/disabled, punk, and radical, you are on my team. Many combinations of the list are my team. I will never question your identity. The only thing I would ever question is your behavior. I am more quick to question the behavior of a cis white straight nondisabled rich person, I'll be real, but asking asking each other to be accountable to our actions and behavior, is part of how I love people. If you're down, welcome to the dope show. If you're not down, sorry it's been so intense, Scarlet, but I'll be letting you off here.

In keeping with my delusion that everyone is in the cast of the same show as me, my partner told me that this gem from anarchistnews.org via Reddit (?!) was throwing itself around on his newsfeed. It's called: "Things Anarchists Say to Me in Private But Never Repeat Publicly." The "Me" is unknown. But, apparently, lots of white people deeply related to it. At least one person of color responded to it, saying how much it hurt them. And at least one white person described how they felt it was about having compassion. I'm into compassion, but I think this misses the mark, and I am excited to break it down, because it illustrates the exact reasons I think that identity politics, and call-outs in the hopes of seeking accountability and justice are so necessary. People run from accountability. Our radical culture needs some healing, but that is not what this strange list of apparent quotations

proposes. I am going to propose some healing in my critique, but rest assured, it's not going to make everybody feel better. Healing hurts, and takes time. Welcome, this is my show.

*****

1) "Call-out culture was developed to allow activist groups to confront leaders who abused their privilege, but now it is being used to settle petty scores on the level of interpersonal politics. I now have a hard time believing some people when they make call-outs because I have seen too many that were based on nothing. Call-outs have become a way to acceptably inflict social violence and rarely are followed up in any way resembling transformative justice because people are not interested in doing the hard work of working with those who are called out."

I agree with this statement more than some others. Sometimes call-outs are used to inflict punitive rather than transformative justice, and no one wants to be the person who holds space for both the survivor and the perpetrator at the same time. People don't see how both parties could be upheld as fucking human beings, even if one of them fucked up and even if the other person inconvenienced everyone by calling attention to the fuck up. That's the key though, listening, holding everyone, taking action, seeking transformative justice in accountability process, not limiting or policing what call-outs could be used for. If this is an anarchist speaking, why are we talking about leaders abusing their privilege? Who are these appointed leaders and why are we imbuing them with extra privileges? It's a bummer that you can't believe someone who says they have been harmed by another person. Yes, I think that the call-out format of seeking accountability can be misused, but the solution is not to just stop believing anyone seeking accountability. And yes, interpersonal conflicts are political too. C'mon, you know better.

2) "As a white person, if I don't automatically agree with whichever person of color is directly in front of me, I run the risk of being labeled a racist. This is a result of good intentions where we want to center people of color and their experiences, but it makes no sense because people of color are not a monolithic block who all agree or share the same experiences. I am basically forced to perform a kind of double-think where I am expected to be able to agree with multiple conflicting viewpoints at the same time—or at least pretend to."

Ugh. I don't even really want to touch this, because honestly, I think that the self-aware soundbyte, "As a white person," could be used to start every quoteblock in this "article", but here goes: Dear As A White Person, As a person of color, I am not asking you to "agree" with everything I say. No one is asking you to do that. When white people agree with anything any person of color says, no matter how harmful or strange or bogus it is, or how much they personally disagree with it, that's tokenizing and racist. What I, a person of color who is not melting into other people of color in one monolithic block, but who has spoken to many other people of color on this topic, is asking you to do, is to listen to us. If a person of color is talking to you, or a group of people, about how they are experiencing, say, racialized dynamics in a group organizing setting, they are probably being honest. There is no such thing as "the race card." Yes, we sometimes name something racism, when other words might also describe said dynamic more specifically or more aptly, but that doesn't mean that the thing being named isn't also racist, and that white people shouldn't pay attention. As a White Person, perhaps if you didn't go into panic mode every time a person of color opened their mouth, you'd actually be able to hear what any one of us is saying.

3) "The line, 'it's not my responsibility to educate you, educate yourself' is being used too frequently. People should only say this when it would be seriously difficult to help educate someone. Otherwise as an anarchist it is your responsibility to help educate people who want to learn, or to help find someone who is willing to do it. Furthermore, refusing to explain yourself contributes to a form of classism in which people with less formal education and access to information are marginalized within anarchist communities. This line line assumes that there are 'correct' resources to be reading that are available, and that the person in question will be able to find them among thousands of conflicting resources."

Hello again, As A White Person! I see you have been joined by your other white friend, As An Anarchist. Now, as a person of color who is also anarchist, who also experiences marginalization from having grown up poor/working class and continuing to be so, and also as a person who educates myself as much as I can on subject matters that I know little about, I understand that there is a certain amount of neurotypical, cognitive privilege that I possess, in being able to read and access certain sociopolitical texts. But please, do not insult mine or anyone else's intelligence by trying to call the phrase, "it's not my job to educate you," classist.

How do we measure the labor of education, especially when much education that we have to give other people is about our own bodies, our own trauma, and the viability of our happiness, liberation, or at the very least, our survival? I educate strangers, who exist at many different stations along spectrums of cognitive privilege, psychic difference, class status, etc. every day. Sometimes I have the energy to do it, and often it has already been used up, but I try to use some more anyway. It is difficult to educate people. It takes patience, love, dedication, nuanced thinking and approaches, and time. I make decisions about when and where to educate people, especially about my body, which people ask me about invasively all the time, simply because I am invading their eyespace by existing. When pointed in a resource direction, by say, another white person, cis person, nondisabled person, etc., I have seen so many different kinds of people do a beautiful job of educating themselves, even when all they had access to was conversation, youtube videos, or borrowed books. There are plenty of books and zines which present information in really clear and simple, accessible ways. And yes, it is not the job of multiply marginalized people to educate everybody else. It's super generous and cool when we choose to be educators. But it is a really helpful thing when more privileged activists choose to educate other people as well—we don't really just keep allies around as window decorations, feel me?

4) "Excluding straight/cis/male people makes sense in queer/trans/women's spaces, but often these people are informally excluded in anarchist spaces that are not any of these things. This hurts our ability to cultivate meaningful popular social power. It's also related to a dynamic where men of color, native men, immigrant men and other groups of marginalized men are severely underrepresented in anarchist spaces. It also assumes that straight/cis presenting people have the option of being 'more queer' or 'more trans,' which is often not the case depending on their circumstances."

If "more queer" or "more trans" refers to medically transitioning, clothing, or other visual, money contingent markers of queerness or transness, I hope that folks can let this go soon. Yes, queer people and transpeople should be affirmed in their gender and sexuality by having access to anything they want to do for their bodies, but also, some queer and transpeople will never present in ways that are read from a dominant narrative or even a dominant queer narrative as queer. Which is why we are all constantly expanding how we see queerness. Yay! Also, As A Straight/Cis/Male, I am definitely not about excluding people of color from spaces, but honestly, I don't think I have ever been in an anarchist or activist space which was not delineated as a space for only queer people, all transpeople, all women, or only anything contained therein, in which straight/cis/male people were excluded from the get go. The general habit of people with gender and sexual and racial privilege is, "When in doubt, take up space." And therefore spaces have to be named as not including straight/cis/male people for them to not show up. White people will even show up to POC spaces unless it is made so explicit that they are not welcome. I would be really surprised if this quote came from a man of color, but if it did, I'd like you to examine what you're saying. I would and do respect organizing spaces that are for people of color only, which include straight/cis/men, but I'm sorry, there do not need to be straight/cis/man centered spaces, period.

5) "Calling people out for using the wrong language, for example saying 'biological female' instead of 'person assigned female at birth,' is harmful and makes no sense because not everyone has access to the same information, they'll never learn if they're excluded, and the 'correct' languages changes every couple of years anyway. People don't want to be associated with us because they see how punishing we are to each other and it turns them off."

Once again, I too, don't like punitive treatment. I think that "calling out" as a phrase is being used too loosely here. I have seen people stop talking to each other, or leave a place crying, because they were told that people with disabilities don't like to be called, "wheelchair people" or "handicaps". If someone corrects your use of a word, thank them. It's not that big of a deal. You're going to be fine. And yes, the language does change. Thank Goddess we're fucking dynamic people, and anarchism and communities working towards

social justice were never supposed to be static, stagnant, and complacent right?

6) "People use 'unsafe' when they mean 'uncomfortable' way too often and it diminishes the meaning of the word 'unsafe' to the point where it's not very meaningful anymore."

Unsafe is still a meaningful word. But yes, privileged people do use the word unsafe in order to deflect people calling them out, and to absolve themselves of accountability. Sort of the theme, here, no? So I personally think that people should just ask themselves, like they would with a trauma therapist or a sweet friend, am I unsafe? Am I triggered? Is my trigger based on a time I felt unsafe? Could I be more specific in describing how I feel? That's one part of the job. The other part is to listen to people when they feel unsafe. And actually engage with them about it, instead of acting on some kneejerk, psychically agreed upon, radical response to the threat of someone feeling unsafe. The next question after someone says they feel unsafe is not, "Really?" But, "What do you need to feel safe so that we can talk about it more?" One time, a white girl said that she didn't feel safe with me in her house [because she had made out with my girlfriend and feared my wrath]. We need to work to communicate with each other about accountability in day-to-day life.

7) "People's obsession with identity politics means the only people who can say stuff like this out loud have to be able to identify themselves as multiply marginalized, and then everyone immediately agrees about how problematic it all is."

Identity politics was created to help people name mechanisms of systemic, identity-based violence. It is the politics of identity-based power dynamics, the politics of identity, not a political belief system in and of itself. If you are naming identity-based dynamics, like, "Hey that's misogynoir because you are talking over me, belittling me, and simultaneously sexually exoticizing me as a Black woman," it's not really fair to respond, "Wow you are so obsessed with identity politics. Why not chill out, give identity politics a chance to call you back for once?" But then again, sure! Maybe I'm just proving this privileged or singularly marginalized person right by writing this and being who I am. Please, don't let me manipulate you into agreeing with me with my multiple marginalized identities.

8) "Who cares about who you personally fuck when we're talking about a broad political movement? Get off the ego trip. What we want is health care, affordable housing, jobs, prison abolition, immigration rights, sex workers rights, and the end of capitalism. 'Queer' has become so fashionable that it's being confused with 'radical'."

No. Heterosexism, transphobia, transmisogyny, discrimination against single parents, and non-normative family structures is not just based on who you fuck, but also how you love, how you live, and how you organize your family, love, and affinity groups. Terrible demeaning sex education and lack of sex education and lack of access to healthcare and safer sex options for poor and queer people is a part of hetero-cis-sexism and misogyny. Queer is also a broad political movement. So I'm sorry we bumped into your universe, As A Straight Person, but the fact that people coming out as queer has become more common doesn't make it bullshit. Also, who is this we, again? As an anarchist, my ultimate goals do not include "jobs" alongside the end of capitalism.

9) "People have no interest in actually changing things anymore. Talking about class and economics isn't fashionable, and in some cases it's downright dismissed and labeled as racist/sexist/homophobic/transphobic. Anarchists don't want to build coalitions with working-class people because they don't want to be 'triggered' by having to explain their politics to people who disagree with them."

I don't think that there has to be an opposition between talking about class and economic struggles and struggles surrounding race, gender, sexuality, etc. 'Cause a working class white trans woman has had a different experience than an upper class brown cis woman yes? You can't break it down and try to compare identity against identity. It is complex and nuanced and deserving of care and thought, and probably best discussed and thought through by these women themselves. Being class marginalized is not mutually exclusive from being race privileged. Just like being racially marginalized is not mutually exclusive from being class privileged. I think the only issue is when people want to discuss class as a response to other kinds of oppression, or at the exclusion of taking other forms of oppression seriously. I honestly can't imagine a queer person of color saying this just as I couldn't imagine a queer person of color saying any of these things.

10) "We've completely failed to build frameworks for accountability and transformative justice, and instead rely on callouts and social exclusion that replicate the prison system without the benefit of having trials."

I agree! Except that we don't have prisons and it's really silly to compare the social exclusion of say, someone who has perpetrated sexual assault to prison. But many anarchists haven't come up with solutions outside of the police and the punitive justice system for healing conflicts in their communities other than doing some yelling and internetting and some willing for it to go away. But I still have hope. Incredible groups like the Bay Area Transformative Justice Project, are still doing the educational, organizing, and healing work necessary to create lasting, transformative justice network responses to things as heavy childhood sexual abuse.

I'm sure that some anarchists say these things in private and don't repeat them in public, but it's troubling to me that some people think that their own ability to relate to this bullet list of contextless quotations pulled from Reddit is a sign that identity politics are failing all of us. What continues to fail radicals is their fear of accountability. We have to make accountability not a dirty fucking word anymore. This isn't easy, accountability has claws and fangs, but I think that punks know better than anybody how to sink in and revel in difficult monstrosity. This is a multipronged responsibility, it will take you and you and you and you and me.

Accessibility Shoutouts: Leo's in North Oakland where I saw Everybody is Dirty and the singer/electric violin player blew my mind with her voice and her blue hair and her bad folk bitch cabaret like stage presence (though the genre of this band is not my flavor, and I don't know what exactly that genre is although their guitarist described them to me as dirty rock'n'roll?? and I hope that they make a rock opera).

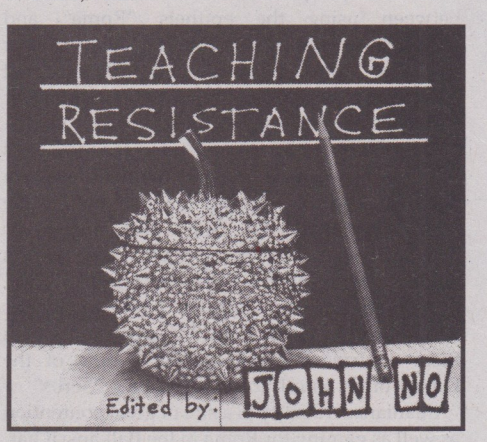
LoBot has always been pretty awesome spatially, but the little bump through the doorway and the steep ramp up to the main area are a little formidable. I saw Alyssa Kai there, who brought theatrical delivery to an acoustic performance and it blew me away. Her lyrics are to die for so if you care about poetry and lame stuff like that, check her out. She also drums and sings for Mallory.

LCM is one of my favorite places to be. So many disgustingly awesome noisy experimental bands of color there. Malportado Kids with members of Downtown Boys, delivers. Literally the most fun to dance to a punk band's ever been, and a Selena encore.

The Cockpit in Seattle was ramped by its constituents in the last couple years, roughly but functionally, and though I have seen several of the local favorites there a few times, I was so stoked to come just to see my friend Takaiya all the way from Australia with Divide and Dissolve. Yes, you may put an oboe in an experimental noise band that dabbles in thrash and improvisational jazz sounds. Delicious.

Inaccessibility Shoutout: Safehouse Arts at the Garage on 1 Grove Street. I was let go from a dance residency because they couldn't figure out how to fix the elevator or who should pay for it or find me an alternative space to rehearse. The amazing Star Amerasu, who is gorgeous sickening DIY politic pop performance art incarnate took my slot on September 10th, I later found out that the performance that was supposed to be concurrent with mine with super inaccessible to a lot of people in the audience. I'm super disappointed in you, Safehouse Arts. Guess I'll be taking my collaboration with Diversions elsewhere.

Beast, out.



Though the institutions of education are historically problematic and often oppressive, students who have experienced them as "outsiders" (including many punks) understand the importance of learning from teachers who have developed radical notions of what

education is and how it works. Teaching Resistance *is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education.*

While most of the teachers reading and writing for this column work in public/state educational systems, the importance of autonomous, independent, and anti-capitalist educational projects across the world cannot be understated. This month's column is by Ferdi, a teacher and doctoral candidate from Texas who has lived in Central and Eastern Europe for six years and Belgrade (Serbia) for two at the InexFilm squatted social center. He describes himself as an anarchist and anti-fascist and intends to stay in Belgrade for as long as "they" let him. The autonomous, collective educational project he works with, Koko Lepo, welcomes new contacts and encourages any readers who are interested in establishing connections or continuing the project to please get in touch (see contact information at the end of the article).

The Place

InexFilm is a squat in the Karaburma neighborhood of Belgrade, Serbia—the "White City." For four years the place has been host to a variety of artists, "activist" groups, concerts, and various spatially-oriented initiatives. It has no relation to NGOs nor the State and it is always under threat of falling to the tides of commercial development in the area. The latest rumor is that the bulldozers are coming for us in less than a week as of this writing. By the time you read this, a battle may already have occurred, the outcome anyone's guess.

The squat also houses an autonomous kindergarten and youth program called "Koko Lepo" within its colorful concrete halls. Koko Lepo is a completely free weekly pedagogical program that serves the residents of a slum called "the Dump" nearby the squat. Most of our students are the children of Kosovar war refugees from the '90s and speak Romani and often Albanian as well as Serbian. Most of the parents of these children work as urban collectors, a thankless, dangerous, and demanding job which will be passed down to our students.

A brief note about language: when speaking about our program to outsiders, we oscillate between using the epithets "Roma" and "Gypsy" to describe the background of our students. "Roma" is an internationally accepted term, which describes either an ethnic group or a stateless nation depending on who you ask. "Gypsy" is typically pejorative but is nonetheless used with greater frequency within the slum itself; historically, it signals a troublesome relationship with the State and hegemonic society. So when we talk to people whose politics we are unsure about, I use the word "Roma" or say nothing at all. When I talk to liberals and NGO careerists, I say "Gypsy" and watch them squirm. Incidentally, the people of the Dump often simply call themselves "Serbs" or "Albanians." Identity is a site of great contention as well as gaming for Roma in the Balkans; it has, in the past, meant the difference between having a job and being buried in a mass grave. People are justifiably sensitive about it.

Roma education rates in Serbia are abysmal compared to the almost total enrollment of Serbian students in the same cities. Amnesty International estimates that only 66 percent of school-aged children are enrolled in primary school while the number drops to a dramatic 10 percent for slum dwellers. Those who do enter school are discriminated against at every level. Their fellow students experiment with their parents' racism while the parents themselves often go so far as to call school administrators and threaten to withdraw their own children if the school accepts Roma students. Members of our collective have had doors closed on their face when trying to enroll some of our students in primary school.

Koko Lepo endeavors to pass on the skills necessary for success in Serbian primary schools while imbuing a sense of autonomy and egalitarianism amongst our students. Serbia is far from a bastion of gender and racial equality despite its socialist heritage. I work as an English teacher for money in the same city. My classes at the private school I work in within a more upscale neighborhood of the White City are based largely on debates about gender parity, heteronormativity, racism, and consumerism. A critical approach to these topics does not come naturally to my English students who are typically unaccustomed even to thinking about *anti-ciganism*, prejudice against gypsies, as a form of racism at all. Racism is what Americans do.

Koko Lepo identifies as anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-authoritarian and as such find our key allies, as well as sources of funding, amongst the international anarchist and anti-fascist movement, particularly in Germany, as well as a bevy of radical hardcore and punks bands. We do not cooperate with NGOs or any other representative of the capitalist State. While I feel compelled to mention a couple of bands in particular who have bent over backwards for the kindergarten, such as Osnabrück's Hirnsäule and Schwäbisch Gemünde's Wasted Youth, the close relationship the kindergarten has to the Belgrade antifascist booking collectives Cherry 76 and Destroy Babylon has brought us closer to the scene than any of us could have hoped. This has also included powerful voices from the Roma hip-hop scene, like the explicitly anti-fascist Gipsy Mafia and the Romani rap legend Lord Kastro who once toured with us as a way to develop our solidarity networks and build awareness about our program in Western Europe.

The Day

On kindergarten days, at least three of us will prepare the room in the morning, text the parents that we will come to pick up their kids, and then head into the slum. We are greeted with love as well as complaints, criticisms, personal problems, and gossip. All in all, the pick-up might take up to an hour on particularly chaotic days. We are now starting our third year as an institution in the Dump and the trust the parents have in us means more to us than anything. We treat it with all the care and affection we try to afford their incredible kids.

Class consists of a warm-up activity, usually with singing, before moving on to a (more or less) voluntary calendar lesson where we focus on numbers, letters, colors, time, and seasons. After this, we have free time where the kids play with the mountains of donated toys and art supplies given to us by our solidarity partners the world over. We have a hot vegetarian lunch which we cook every day, often with the kids' help, and then play some games, perhaps do some directed educational activities, sing some songs, and then get ready to walk back home.

On youth program days, which we call *Školica*, or "Little School," we typically take between twenty and thirty kids between the ages of eight and fourteen on field trips around the city. We have taken over parks, pools, cinemas, youth theaters, and other places in Belgrade that our kids might otherwise feel marginalized in or at best see as extensions of their workplace as collectors. When *Školica* uses the city, our kids own it. When such trips aren't possible, we tend to do some modest program in the anarchist infoshop "Furija" in the same squat. Our two collectives share several members and, for the most part, the same ideals of autonomy, equality, and direct action.

The program is exhausting and addictive. There isn't one amongst us who hasn't felt the sense of satisfaction that can only come with doing something you are proud of for people you adore and all on the basis of voluntary association. The total absence of any monetary consideration or valuation of our labor allows the project to be valued only by its effects. We see the value of this program in our student's development and, in some key cases, eventual success in their official primary school programs after graduating from ours. We count our losses in missed days, disappointing our families through broken promises and an all-too-often surface level commitment to their daily struggles. Each day ends with a tally of both and far too many of them have ended with our accounts in the red. The long arc, however, bends towards victory. Each loss is a lesson and each success a precious reminder that this whole thing could actually mean something to someone in the end.

The Paradox

Of course, the paradox of training our children in our autonomous alternative program so they can better integrate with an inherently exploitative and often soul-crushing State education system is never far from my mind. I won't speculate on the thoughts of my comrades in the collective, but I have never seen our mission as strictly one of integration. For me, we are arming our children to meet the system that hates them with a slightly better footing than they might otherwise have without us.

It is important to me and others in the collective that Koko Lepo never become merely a DIY version of a mission trip. We cannot be some teenager's Guatemalan summer where the deep inequities and structural violence of global capitalism are boiled down into a few selfies and the phrase, "I think I really did some good *down there*." How we maintain and materialize this separation is never entirely clear and we try to be vigilant of it. Sadly, we have failed miserably at this from time to time. One ex-member would even occasionally do tours of the slum for guests before he was kicked out of the collective for

even worse. To help combat these tendencies we've made rules about photography in the program, try to keep the topic of race and class alive in our meetings, and have experimented with integrating members of the settlement into the program to help "offset the white balance," so to speak. This last task has proven prohibitively difficult as those who are old enough to help out with the kids but are not yet working full-time for the family are generally supposed to be in school. We decided early on that Koko Lepo should not be an excuse to skip school even if we don't like the system: the paradox again...

Our program is far from perfect. We are constantly tackling issues of race, gender, tradition, inequity, and all the myriad problems one might expect from such an effort. Our meetings are often sites of heated and mean arguments, tearful accounts of our failures, gallows humor, etc. Despite this, I doubt there is one amongst our members who has not felt, standing at the open door of our colorful kindergarten that we built with our own hands, that there can be nothing in this world more worthwhile or more necessary. Moreover, there is nothing in this world that will stop us from seeing it through.

The Lesson

It took only three people and safe space to make this happen initially. Since then, members have come and gone but the consistency of our program and the consistency of its message, at this point, might outlast all of us in the current collective. We are a consensus-based group with no distinction between workers and members. Anyone interested in committing their time to the program who is in line with our basic principles is welcome to participate. We do take care to pull, in a general sense, from our existing affinity groups—or at least make sure we can find someone who can speak for new members as a way to protect ourselves from possible infiltration by the police or worse. In fact, we have suffered worse and have survived, learning all sorts of hard lessons along the way.

It is important to us that our lessons be your lessons; I can promise you, reader, that yours have been, and will continue to be, ours. Regardless of the fate of our beloved Belgrade squat, this project is far from finished. More importantly, there is little in it that is not replicable in some way or another in your own neighborhoods given the right space and the commitment of a handful of individuals. Mutual aid is how we express solidarity for those with whom we seek equality in our common struggle for both survival and significance in the face of exploitation, hatred, and systemic violence.

Thanks for paying attention.

facebook.com/kokolepoav / kokolepoav@riseup.net

Infoshop Furija: infoshopfurija.noblogs.org
Cherry 76 booking: facebook.com/cherry76collective
Destroy Babylon: facebook.com/destroybabylonbooking

As mentioned earlier, the Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com.

There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.

"The tenant man stared after it, his rifle in his hand.
His wife was beside him, and the quiet children behind.
And all of them stared after the tractor."
—Grapes of Wrath, Chapter 5

"Justice? Who asks for justice? We make our own justice."
—Leto I Atreides

"Sleeping all day, sitting up all night
Poncing fags, that's all right
We're on the dole and we're proud of it
We're ready for Five More Years!"
—4-Skins, "Five More Years"

You Are the Burden of My Generation

Namaste knuckleheads! We're back after taking a month off. We had to move HQ from one gentrified Black neighborhood to a different, soon-to-be gentrified Black neighborhood. Goodbye laundromat, make way for a small batch coffee roaster/charcuterie bistro called "Parch." See ya later, Sweats an' Thangs, say hello to a newish Subaru with a Bernie Sanders bumper sticker being driven by two 30-year-olds with a baby! O'barf! I don't enjoy feeling like the tractor from *Grapes of Wrath*, nor am I keen to keep chasing after ribbons and sugar like Mollie from *Animal Farm*. My name is Turbo, gaddamnit, not Mollie. Anyway, if you're looking for some crack, come to my block cuz judging by the volume of cars idling on the street, and number of bozos coming and going, one of my neighbors has some good shit. But I digress. Onwards to Oi! Oi! power!

THE PISSED ONES – *All Pissed Up* cassette (Tape or Die): These snot nosed Dresdeners play a loose and, er, accessible style of '77 punk. This piss-yellow tape is lowbrow in all the right ways. The BOYS, REAL KIDS, and BUZZCOCKS are all classic bands that popped out on first listen. And of the eight songs on the tape two are covers: the BRIEFS, "Rotten Love" and the STITCHES, "Nowhere." Get where they're coming from? The cover of the tape is a pisstake on *All Skrewed Up*. I suppose the cover to *All Skrewed Up* is easy to replicate and maybe that's the impetus to ape it? I don't know. Seems lazy. If VANITY did it, I'd give a pass but the PISSED ONES? They go down a grade. Xerox insert with lyrics. This a B+ tape from an A+ tape-only label. Maybe next time the PISSED ONES don some pageboy wigs and zits and give the REAL KIDS the respect they deserve.

THE CHARLEY FEW – *The Few, The Proud* cassette (This Fucking City): The Philadelphia Oi! attack is back with three new tunes of Oi! Oi! goodness. Punx and skins will unite to pogo smashers, "Oi! Punk!," "Never Gave Up!" and "Actions Not Words!" Some lyrics from the latter: "*Strike first! Strike fast! Don't leave means for a counter attack! / Hit hard! Draw blood! Broken teeth falling into the street/ Encircled around, no one intervenes / Fighting for life, not staring at screens.*" The CHARLEY FEW along with other Philly heavy-hitters, THUNDER & GLORY, DUFFY'S CUT and SWEET FUCK ALL seem to be bringing back Oi! to the Cradle of Liberty. Use your Google Watch or whatever and get a copy at: thecharleyfew.bandcamp.com

THE UNCOUTH – *KC United / Gudbuy T'Jane* 7" (Too Much Rock): This is a short lil' record: Two-sides, two-songs spinning at 45 rpms. The A-Side is an up-tempo Skinhead-rock'n'roll ode to their hometown scene of Kansas City, Missouri wherein they urge the "punx and skins to unite and win" after making a statement that the "punx and skins are united." The flip is a stripped down cover of a sleazy SLADE single, "Gudbuy T'Jane." They add in some gang vocals and turn down the glam but keep it rooted in the parking lot. It's good and on point. But SLADE was good, and on point so not much is gained. They didn't add in a ska breakdown or anything. This record is part of the Too Much Rock single series. Too Much Rock (turrble name) Records asks a band from Kansas City for one original and then gives them a song to cover. None of the other bands in the series are skins or play Oi! so we don't care too much about Too Much Rock. This lil' record is just fine and piqued my interest in the band and Kansas City in general which I hadn't thought about in regards to Oi! since the MAIN STREET SAINTS dropped their *perfect* American-oi! album, *Everybody Wants to go to Heaven...* way back in '99. If you're into Oi! The Boat or VICTORY or OLD FIRM CASUALS you'll dig this. But we'll all dig the UNCOUTH more when they put out a proper LP.

HOWITZER – *2015 Demo* mp3s: This is the sound of the Upper Canadian Rebellion. HOWITZER is from Niagara Falls, Ontario. And like the Falls, HOWITZER will mangle your puny body if you're not careful. Paul Bearer-esque vocal grunts. NEGATIVE APPROACH meets the OPPRESSED. Skinhead hardcore in the vein of modern day masters like 86 MENTALITY, VACANT STATE, and HIRED GOONS. You know it. You'll prolly love it. Hear it at: Howitzerarmy.bandcamp.com.

MARTENS ARMY & SHAVED HEADS – *Our League* split 7" (Still Burning Records, Tough Times Music, Street Rock Music)

Wrapping up this month we have a German/Russian friendship split. MARTENS ARMY is from Leipzig, while SHAVED HEADS hail from

the home of Ayn Rand and Vladimir Putin, St. Petersburg. You get two songs from each band and both bands thankfully sing in their native tongues. If I want to hear broken shitty English, I'll strike up a conversation with the Yinzers on my crew about the degradation of *dahn tahn* or the *Stillers*. MARTENS ARMY plays a hard, but melodic brand of Oi! The music is up-tempo and anthemic with thick vocals backed by terrace chant choruses. Similar to PÖBEL UND GESOCKS. MARTENS ARMY's contributions are about being a skinhead and a love letter to SHAVED HEADS thanking them for their friendship. Both good tunes. SHAVED HEADS have an urgent raw sound. Like an Oi! version of MOSCOW DEATH SENTENCE (Gang favorite, btw). The vocals on their song, "Streetrock" brought to mind PUSSY RIOT in their short, sharp delivery. And "Honest Labor" almost sounds like something that could have been played on that rooftop in *Rodrigo D.* Still very much Oi! though. Maybe a Russian BANDEIRA DE COMBATE? Street level shit. The split comes with an insert that has translations for all songs into English, which is helpful, but still a bit confusing. From "Honest Labor": "You can be proud for your slave labor/ But keep staying in service area/ Job is better than staying in one place/ Main thing is to be responsible for honesty." Regardless, the song is a stunner. SHAVED HEADS win the fight, but it's probably more of a tag-team affair.

Thanks for reading. Good to be back. More next month. Take care. Ears!

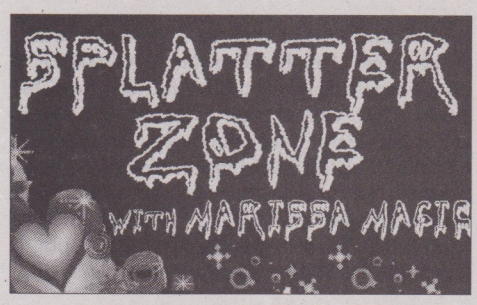
ENDNOTES:

1) Send all thank you letters and notes of adoration to: AMERICANBOOTGANG@gmail.com

2) Things I can't live up to: OIOFAMERICA.blogspot.com. They continue to draw my attention to new bands and cause me to revisit old bands every time I read their blog. Winners.

3) Ya know nothing against anyone else's methods, but like the title of that SHORBIRDS song says, tinctures are 90% alcohol. Let me just go cure my headache with this hammer.

4) Things we miss becuz our heads are up Oi!'s ass: the MARTHA/BENNY THE JET RODRIGUEZ split. If this thing were maple syrup it would be Grade B Dark Amber. MARTHA is the best pop band going. And I never heard of this BENNY THE JET dude but their side was solid. But man, MARTHA is skinhead approved.



I'm a heat wimp and it's been in the nineties, monstrously hot, my brain is on fry.

I'm a heat wimp and nothing gets done. My thoughts frazzle out and I feel incapacitated. Last heatwave I got a migraine where four days in I just started to eat weed until I didn't give a shit. Either way it basically resulted in feeling sorry for myself and staring at a TV, images moving and nothing getting in. It feels impossible to get anything done and then I feel bad about getting nothing done. Generally I prefer drizzle and rain and fog but really ever since I returned to California I turned into a rain wimp. Like, in the Northwest people don't really use umbrellas or wear rain jackets and go about their day like normal in the rain. If you didn't, you would never leave the house. But now I'm back in the Bay Area and seasons don't even really exist here. Somehow my neighborhood is extremely windy though, and whenever it's windy I picture the future as an almost barren earth, everything reduced to rocks and harsh shrubs and the few, if any, trees that exist have bent to the weather, growing horizontal.

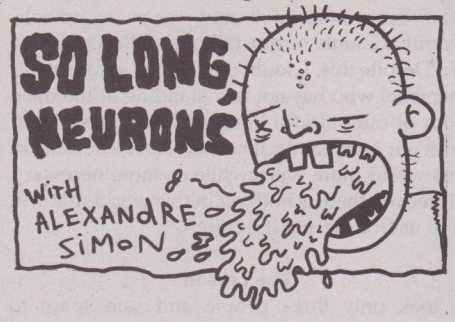
Last week Mozart recorded and I had forgotten what it was like to hear good recordings of your new band and then be like "OUR BAND IS SO SICK." It is, it's true. Like we had an idea we were good but we just sat there and listened to the playback flipping out and screaming incoherently.

After the death of Stillsuit, I think I talked about this before, I got into a weird mindset that my next new thing had to be *so good*. We were all already in other bands when Stillsuit ended, the main difference being that the other two people are in bands that are well liked. My thing, The Blues, isn't. I love my band (The Blues). We do all of these cool things—we just opened a collaborative art show and have a residency connected to said art show. It stretches the bounds of being in a band and blurs the lines between music and art and performance and I dig it. But it's jarring to be in a well-liked band and then to suddenly not be. And it feels weirder to have former bandmates in bands people care about. And then feels worse to care about that type of thing.

I exited Stillsuit with a desire to just sing in a punk band. Jackson was telling me his new band was slow moving; he had never played drums, Grace had never played guitar, they didn't even have a *singer*. Soon after I woke up one morning, still drunk, or specifically drunk enough to bully my way into a band. I sent a message to Jackson offering my services as a lead singer. Within an hour I received a message that I was in. Later that very same week I walked into practice and was told we had a show in three weeks. So now we managed to get around to making decent recordings, to realize how great our band is. Ta-da, yadda yadda. Then Flipper rejected us because we're "not established." Their loss

There is so much lamenting about the Bay Area being swallowed into homogeny. Years ago it was a bummer to admit to myself that the San Francisco I lived in was not the San Francisco I wanted. Oakland is swiftly flipping towards blah. I mean, but really, it's the same thing happening in every metropolitan area across the country. I was talking to my mother and she was asking me what cities I liked. But maybe I'm done with cities. They're all so crowded. And if they're not, they're about to be. It's tempting to say there are too many people but the implication of that is there should be less, that people should disappear (die). Oh, oh but enough whining, onto something different.

I haven't worked in two months and it fucking rules. I've started making weird food and exercising and spending all day reading and doing art stuff. The other day I spent six hours editing a video and by the end I was fried but also was like, this rules and I'm very lucky to have the option to spend my day doing that. I was talking to a friend in a similar situation and he was saying the same shit. Just time to have a clear head, not being run down by the drudgery of a job. Today I will work in the garden, make some kind of meal using stuff from said garden, hang out in my underwear and draw, go mix the Mozart demo, maybe bedroom dance to 13th Floor Elevators. I feel alright.



This month I interviewed Rich from the *Terminal Boredom* website, who recently released two issues of a killer print zine under the same (*Termbo*) moniker. Space ain't cheap, so let's just say that in my world the combination of *MRR* and *Termbo* print and web is all one really needs to stay up to date on international punk—the rest is just a mix of cool bonus and utter garbage. While I'm at it, I'd like to thank Rich and the gang for introducing me to favorites like early Tyvek, Psychedelic Horseshit, Home Blitz or more recently Mordecai, among many others.

So the *Termbo* website's been going on for what, ten, fifteen years now? I was wondering why you decided to start a print zine under the same name? Were you a little bored in between reviewing records for the site, watching baseball, and interviewing Mordecai? Do you have a day job? Other time-consuming interests?

The website has been going for twelve years now I think, and we did *Blank Generation* for a few years before that as well, so fifteen years is about right. The real urge to finally do a print version (something I'd passively wanted to do since day one) came off the heels of doing *Scratch'n'Sniff* zine with my friend Brandon from Brown Sugar. We did two issues of that and had a third planned, but it just sort of fizzled out due to various reasons. But collaborating with him on *SNS* really got me inspired to do the print version of *Termbo*. I was reminded how enjoyable layout and even assembly was. It's a great thrill to create a physical manifestation of something you care a great deal about, and there are things you can pull off in print that you really can't on a webpage. The time just seemed right, and I was also very inspired by corresponding with Brendan (Annesley) and his asking me to contribute to *Negative Guest List*. His energy was contagious

even just through e-mails and letters. We had a plan hatched to make *SNS* the American outlet of *NGL* and vice-versa, which never came to fruition. I would be remiss if I didn't mention DX as well, *Distort* made a big impact as far as what I realized a print zine could be like these days—I really thought paper was dead at the time until I started seeing their zines. I still love doing the site and think the "webzine" provides a crucial function (in regards to reviews in particular), and the print version is sort of the condensed version of the site focusing on the stuff I *really* love. I guess it's sort of my pet project, something I can do for fun at my own pace.

I have a very time consuming and semi-stressful day job that eats about 50 hours of my time every week. My other non-*Termbo* time-consuming interests involve hanging out with my lovely wife and two dogs, working on our house and garden, watching baseball and hockey and trying to stay on top of the huge pile of books I want to read. Every other spare minute is spent trying to work on *Termbo*, which usually means I don't sleep all weekend and stay up working on the zine or site all night.

Iggy Pop was on the cover of the first two issues. Greg Ginn and current-era Black Flag were featured in both as well. Is that gonna be the case in all future issues?

Yes, all issues will have Iggy covers to pay tribute to the greatest band of all time. The Stooges are the reason why I'm even talking to you right now. Maybe I'll slip the Ashetons in there too someday, we'll see. Each issue will also have Black Flag content of some sort, not necessarily current-era Ginn stuff though, as I don't think we can go much further with that. If anyone out there has ideas for Flag articles regarding topics that haven't been talked to death yet, please get in touch.

What's the response been like to the print zine so far?

The response has been quite larger than I expected and it was a bit of a surprise. Sam from Feel It and Rich at Total Punk have both been a huge help in distribution and more than a few stores across the states have helped as well. I've been looking for European distribution, but it's a tougher nut to crack than I thought. I also haven't been hustling it that hard anyway since individual orders from overseas seem to be doing fine. I could probably get in more stores and distros if I really pushed it, but I'm trying to keep it to where it's manageable for me to do myself. I think releasing the "Best of" zines that compile the early website content alongside the actual new *Termbo* issues has helped with mailorder—people probably feel better ordering the package deal instead of just a single zine each time. I plan to keep doing them in pairs, it seems to be working out well.

To me it feels like 2014/2015 have been shitty years for fanzines, with not many cool new titles, etc. It could be me being a nostalgic wimp, but I look back at 2010/2012 as a sort of "golden era," when there were new issues of HC/garage/punk zines popping up all the time in OZ and the US, when *NGL* was publishing every month, *Distort* was on fire and gave birth to tons of aggro HC zines, the US had *Accept the Darkness* and *Counterfeit Garbage* and a bunch of others...Shit, that's not even a question really, but any thoughts? What current fanzines do you recommend?

Those years where *NGL* and *Distort* were firing hard were certainly something special. They were the only ones I read voraciously and that really mattered to me. I think most American zines paled in comparison, or at least the ones I saw. I might not be the best person to answer that question either though, as I wasn't reading much beyond the Australians. I'm reading more paper zines today than I was in 2012. I think there's a good crop of current zines, *Cretins of Distortion* in particular. The layout and youthful energy is inspiring, plus I like that they do stuff like rubber stamping and different printing techniques—that last issue had the envelope glued inside with stickers and stuff in it. It's so cool, plus it helps they're covering the Midwest punk scene which is just killing it right now. *Degenerate* is always good to see. *Stitches in My Head* has been great. *Down & Out* is always worthwhile even though he covers some bands/genres I'm not that into and I don't often agree with some of his reviews—but it's so well put together and he has a real passion for it. I thought the first issue of *Casting Couch* was really good. New issues of *Savage Damage Digest* are always a welcome sight. *Bull Tongue Review* has been very interesting thus far. I wish *Limited Readership* would come back.

When I started reading *Termbo* you guys were all about fucked up garage and *MRR* was all about hardcore. Then for a while it felt like it was the opposite, and now I'm just not sure. What happened there?

I've thought about this a lot as well. The years when *Termbo* started there was still a pretty big divide between the hardcore and garage punk scenes, it was just two totally different things that existed separately. You didn't really cross over like kids do these days. I think as this new generation of kids came around, ones that were listening to say Nine Shocks or Los Crudos as much as Reatards and Teengenerate, things shifted and started intermingling in a way they hadn't before. Kids seem to be ignoring some of the more rigid "rules" that hardcore genres tend to have. And "garage" ended up becoming less about punk and more about being psych or whatever and sort of changed that template as well. Now we're left with some weird bastardization of it all, where I think keeping the "punk" part intact is the most important factor. It's hard to even quantify what's garage or hardcore anymore, at least as far as the good bands go. Are Lumpy & the Dumpers or Mystic Inane hardcore bands? Garage-punk? Garage-core? Just punk? I don't even know anymore. I just know that they're good. Youth has triumphed over genre. I think it's a really great time for music.

***MRR* reviewed both issues of *Termbo*, and both times it mentioned a certain "male vibe" to it. What are you gonna do about it? Any plans for a "women special?" Is that a terrible question?**

Yes, it's a terrible question Alex. I certainly had no intention of having a "male vibe" and never honestly thought about it. I just talk about bands that I like. I hope it doesn't come across as misogynist or anything, as that certainly is not intended. I don't plan on doing anything different than I always have, which is cover good bands and labels I believe in, regardless of gender. However, as the contributors and content of the zine continue to change and evolve, so could the "vibe" of the zine, I imagine.

One question about the website and message board. To me they're the #1 daily source to stay up to date on current punk/HC/garage, and I can only imagine I'm not alone. For instance I'm guessing some people who write for publications like *Vice*/*Noisey*/*Pitchfork* must check your site for "inspiration," then write about the upcoming bands they read about and make a bit of money with it (that's only a wild guess). Since *Termbo* doesn't seem concerned with making cash, how do you feel about that?

I suppose there could be publications farming *Termbo* for ideas and content. There's not much I can do about that. I thought about making the site a members-only thing at one point, but then realized that really defeated the purpose—I always wanted *Termbo* to be something anyone could come to, not some secret club. I've been approached about running ads and other revenue ideas for the site, but again, I think it defeats the purpose of the whole thing as far as trying to maintain some semblance of integrity. And if a band that I like maybe gets a leg up, sells some records or makes some money in that way, then I'm happy for the site to be their stepping stone. That's the intent.

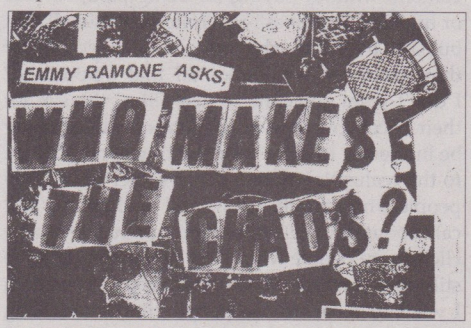
Also, the internet has changed a lot since the site began. Social media changed the game. I just became a bit disillusioned with the internet in general for a time. There's so much noise it's tough to make an impression with just good content, without paying (or being paid) for ads or hustling for "likes" and followers and all that bullshit. It's too much work and when you really think about it what does all that amount to? I don't want someone to just "like" the site on their Facebook page or whatever and not really be interested in what we're talking about. I came to the realization that I would rather have 2,000 people who actually follow and read the site and care about the music we cover than 10,000 mouse clicks from people who could give a shit. The site still does pretty well, and I'm happy about that. I want to focus on the people that are sticking around and I think we're at a good stage now. I have this idea that the website is for everyone—all reviews will be published there and we'll continue on as normal. I think it's important that the reviews have as large an audience as possible—the bands and labels sending stuff in deserve that. I still feel like the site is a very useful resource for the internet audience. The print zine is more for the people who deeply care about what we're doing, for more than just the casual fan of marginal music. It will only cover the stuff that I truly believe in. The site and the new issues of *Termbo* will always have completely different content to sort of set the boundaries and

make it worthwhile for people to buy and read the zine. It's sort of a companion piece to the website I guess. For those who want to immerse themselves further.

What's gonna be in the third issue of the zine?
The long-awaited Mordecai interview, Neil Hagerty (Royal Trux), Shoot It Up and one or two other possibilities that will hopefully pan out, as well as a new installment of Video Hell, something about Black Flag and hopefully some new poetry and artwork. I'm hoping to have the new one out by the end of summer/early fall along with another volume of *Termbo: The Early Years*.

What's gonna be in your 2015 top 10?
Mystic Inane 7"es. CCTV 7". Coneheads LP, if that counts. Black Time LP and Midnight Mines tapes. Home Blitz *Foremost & Fair* LP. Sun Bather 7"es. Mongoloid 7". Tapehead 7". Rik and the Pigs demo/7". Power 12". Ivy 7". Homostupids cassettes and live. Ballroom 12". I'm currently obsessed with the Tropical Trash LP. I think there are going to be some real killers coming out later this year too.

Any last words?
I'd like to thank everyone for the support over all of these years: labels, bands, readers, message board posters and lurkers, and all of the staff that have helped me out, Rob Vertigo and Dave Hyde in particular. I'd also like to apologize to everyone that sends us review materials, as I wish I could work faster and review more stuff in each update. I try to do as much as I possibly can (as do the other guys) with the limited time available and try and keep the "quality" somewhat consistent. Every time I post reviews I feel like I failed by not getting to every single record and tape. I'm trying, trust me, and I hope people understand. And thank you, Alex, for these questions. It's honestly stuff like this that inspires me to continue.



As you see people in leather jackets at shows and begin to refrain from the thought of "who do they think they're kidding?" you realize we've reached the end of summer. This one for me felt like one of my calmer summers to date. I went on a little tour, lost my mind somewhere along the line, and then came home and tried not to spend money for a solid two months.

Tour was pretty fun, Ben from *NUTS!* proved to me that Times Square really does look like daytime at 5:00 a.m. then took me to a diner that serves some shit with cottage cheese and jello on it and called that shit a salad. It reminded me of home! In Western Massachusetts I went to park the van and while I was looking for parking a turtle started crossing the street and everyone got out of their cars to take pictures on their iPhones of said turtle and I had to turn around, that got the group all split up! Western Mass was quite the trip...the next morning straight-up saw old people holding signs that said "War is Bad" and across the street a young kid with a sign that said "Let's dance" or some fucking bullshit like that. It was a crazy day in liberal America. The next day, though, I scored that one Gizmos record that says "Never Mind the Sex Pistols..." which is not only one of my favorite records ever but has a label on it that reads "FROM THE HOME OF LEGIONNAIRES DISEASE AND THE STATE THAT BROUGHT YOU JIM JONES + CHARLES MANSON." Which was the really amazing cherry on top of my highest "wants"!

A lot more happened on that trip but it was two months ago, fuck maybe even three, who knows? And really, who wants to read a tour diary? Who needs to read "Jake made us chili in Philly and Jim thought it was too spicy so he got sour cream. This caused a rift in the band of Jake's side or Jim's side. Jake's cat got shaved and was really embarrassed. Winston saw a centipede and slept in the van. Good times!!" twelve times in a row? What do you think this is, *Kill Yr Parents Garden*? But I listened to a lot of music via that tour, and other music listening methods this summer. I do worry I'm turning into quite the jaded fucker though, I wore pants like 75% of the time this summer and have been feeling a lot of stagnation in punk that I used to brush off a lot more easily But I think it's just the way life goes, I don't see it as a turn of phase or lifestyle change.

Part of me loves the regurgitation style of punk. I really do love the idea of music serving a purpose besides being good and original. Art and music don't have to only serve the purpose of innovation and originality. Music and art can and should serve purposes of upholding a style or backdrop of culture. That's really important—just look at cultures that are a lot more developed and important than punk and recognize how important the role of music is. If people weren't still playing classical music in hotel lobbies, I don't think Beethoven and Bach would be the household names they are today, just like if bands weren't blatantly ripping of small percentage of Discharge's discography in a really horrendous house I don't think they would be such a bootleg shirt staple. If we don't embrace what came before us and uphold its traditions what's the point of claiming "punk" as our style, culture, lifestyle? Growth and innovation are immensely important aspects of creation but they don't need to cancel out history and tradition. Basically what I'm trying to say is I don't think a continuous cycle of bands that rip off SSD and Discharge is a sign of punk being stagnant. Because every year, day, second, there is a new kid getting into that and I think it would suck if they don't get to have a few years of being ecstatic someone is covering "Ready to Fight."

Like my brother is about to turn fourteen and he went the mall and bought *Dookie*. Who the fuck would have thought kids still went to the mall and bought *Dookie* on CD in 2015? But that's really beautiful thing about punk music, music in general really, but on a very visible level in punk. It exists in all sort of spaces and capacities for the people who need it, want it, have it. Guitar Center sells Misfits shotglasses, Used Kids always has a copy of some Havoc reissues in the dollar section, and Dripper World has some fucked up hand-drawn bootleg Screamers shirts. Everyone has their piece that really works for them. I guess right now listening to bands that are a good mix of USHC sound and blasting D-beats is just far off my radar but it's in no way out of my mind, heart, and soul.

The punk world is so "*now*" driven. Records sell out in a month's time or they seemingly suck; a kid listens to a Posh Isolation tape for a month and feels the need to sell off all his Confuse records and buy an awkwardly lengthened gold chain at the pawn shop and an Adidas jumpsuit. I don't know if this comes from some sort of need for validation, like "As a Wretched fan I *must not like jazz*" or if it's some form of the growing process where people need drastic changes in their lives to mark their maturity, but it's there and it's noticeable. I don't really get it. Records and bands are great and timeless for hundreds of different reasons. I think my point is (and I'm just as guilty as anyone of this problem as anyone) that it is important to find the records and styles that fill the many grooves and voids our lives have instead of trying to just cram Discharge into them all. That's what makes that shit stagnant, when people try to fill every hole in their with one bootleg patch, all the people feel inferior when they aren't in the mood for a Cro-Mags cover. I'll go to shows and see people who look at my studded jacket with Big Boys painted on the back like it's some kind of fucking sin, like Kawakami isn't gonna let them into their raw punk heaven if they allow people to put not-Disclone patches on their decked jackets. That shit is stagnant. The Chaos in Tejas crusty to Beserkertown socialite is what I see as stagnant. Not the fact the 14-year-old kids still love Green Day, and not that bands still write regurgitated riffs, but the people who look at punk music as a bunch of bubbles to either embrace or check off the list. Music and art co-exist like any other stimulation, loving soul music isn't going to impair your ability to love Amebix, but I do think that sort of mindset will keep you from a lot of interesting and awesome shit and think it's really sad if you're ok with that.

Anyway, here's show shit that made me feel a lot less stagnant. Mystic Inane wrote a really incredible punk song called "Eggs Onna Plate." I'm sure a lot of people think of this song as some kinda "slime punk" anthem because eggs are gooey and pretty gross when raw, but I'm sure a lot of those people also take pictures of most of their meals and share them on the internet. Not that there is anything wrong with that, and not saying everyone who's posted a meal on instagram is a yuppie. But there are people who are content with going and getting a carton of eggs and a bottle of ketchup once a week and calling it groceries and that person is just a different breed than the instagram food fans. It's not as much about being broke, or being lazy, or being a boring eater, as it is about that lifestyle of just being content with having eggs every day. It is the people who only apply for dead end jobs, who don't wish they had a college degree, who

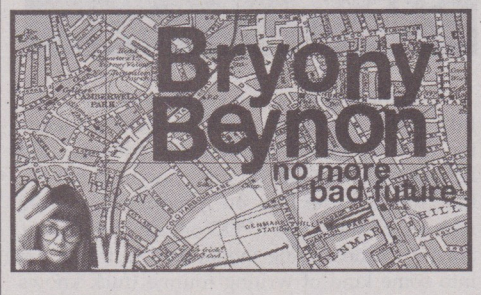
don't care that they have eggs for breakfast every day. It's a mindset of squalor, kids content with embracing their neglect. In a world of us vs. them anthems being sung by fancy boys their meaning becomes saturated but Mystic Inane stands out, ugly of their own neglect, giving an anthem that simply represents the *us*. The nastiness of *us* portrayed in this song without the obvious contrast of the cleanness of *them* is what makes it really fantastic.

In Columbus there is a band that is relatively new called Dana. They're my favorite band in Ohio at the moment. They play pretty blues-driven music with a huge hunger for freedom. Their guitar player also plays as Strep Torso, the strangest and best noise performer I've ever seen, and their bass player performs Jesus and Mary Chain-style experimental stuff under the name Egon Gone. The singer puts emphasis on her words with an anger and attitude that reminds me of the Bags and plays a Theremin in way that really takes the emphasis in her vocals and the song's hooks and makes them like a loaded gun. Their sound takes strong hints from Pere Ubu's *Modern Dance*. They manage to hold their sound together tightly all while giving heavy hints to the explosive sounds they contain, leaving their sound vulnerably unhinged. They have a recording that they did in one take for pirate radio station WLSD that sounds really good but is nothing compared to their live show.

Get in line for mental decline with Urochromes from Western Massachusetts, who have to be the catchiest band in punk right now. They got a drum machine and a load of riffs above it. For a singer they got a boy with a problem! Instead of laying out his problems as one large lyrical complaint though, you find the problems of Jackie Boy and the world being lectured to you in songs like "I Don't Wanna Be Like Me" and "Trapped on a Planet." We find ourselves cringing over the idea of Jackie picking on his own best friends and the idea of our existence being truly glued to a rock. What's really important about Urochromes is that they managed to repackage catchy riffs and songs about being a fucker in a way that is equally familiar and original. At the end of the day some kids will mosh and some kids will bum a cigarette at the sight of a drum machine and Urochromes's relevance will remain.

In brief: Olivia Neutron-John is my favorite artist and operates incredibly fluidly and flawlessly on both an audio and visual level; Tenement wrote a four-sided LP of B sides that is absolutely flawless; Uranium Club wrote an incredible record that demonstrates some of the best songwriting from a punk band in recent memory; Sediment Club is incredible live and exciting on record; the "punk" world needs more acts like Mal Devisa and Indiana's Sweet Poison Victim isn't punk at all but you should care about them. I'm really excited to get the new Dam-Funk record and that's not punk at all either but I think you might like it. More elaborated statements on all of that in the future.

I wrote a new issue of my fanzine *Cretins of Distortion* that covers all Ohio punk. Interviews with Spike in Vain, Ron House and Mike Rep and *The Offense* fanzine, as well as over 100 write-ups of old bands and a decent modern review section. You can get that at bugcartel.storenvy.com or you can email me at emmyeatsbutts@gmail.com or write at 2656 Dayton Ave, Columbus, OH 43202 USA. I ask $5 for it, $6 ppd, but if that is out of your budget I'd be happy to work something out, as well as accept trades for *your* zine or tape or record. I'm still very behind on trades, if you haven't received something from me you should email me and remind me. Stay tuned for news of a new fanzine I'm working on called *Mental Whiff*. Blah blah blah, go have some fun!!



I'm back, this time with an insight into a truly unmatchable social centre which needs no introduction: Bradford's 1 in 12, the venue for too many legendary anarcho punk and hardcore gigs to mention, and a real institution that seems to stand strong in spite of it all. I caught up with Alex, who's been the admin coordinator there since 2009. RIP Protag.

The 1 in 12 must be one of the longest established and last remaining few social centers in the UK. By way of an introduction for those who may not know, could you describe what the 1 in 12 is and a bit of background as to its existence? And the story behind the name!

The 1 in 12 is a members' club and social center in Bradford, West Yorkshire. We run a bar and gig venue and are also home to a café, anarchist library, letterpress machine, record label and practice room/studio. "Anarchically run" is a half-joking tag that has been used to describe our method: we aim to organize on non-hierarchical lines with core principles of Liberty, Equality, and Solidarity. Mutual aid, self-management and co-operation are written into our constitution.

The 1 in 12 as a concept evolved out of an unemployed claimants' union in 1981. Originally it was a way for people on the dole to fight the grimness of Thatcher's Britain by organizing politically and creating access to affordable gigs and places to socialize. The events organized moved around different Bradford venues and the project grew in strength until in 1988 we bought a building, partly using a community grant. After licensing wrangling it opened in May of that year. The name was a cheeky two fingers to a 1981 government report into benefit fraud which declared that 1 in 12 people claiming state benefits were doing so fraudulently.

Who's involved on a day to day basis and how do you split tasks and make decisions? How long have you been involved there and what is your role?

Decision-making happens at bi-monthly members' meetings, which are open to any member. New members have to be proposed by an existing member, pay a small fee and agree to abide by a few basic guidelines. It's free for asylum seekers. At most meetings there is a group of semi-regulars and others who drop in from time to time. There are various yearly volunteer posts like secretary, treasurer and chair, who interact with two small groups which meet to discuss issues and make proposals. One is the bar collective, who keep the bar staffed four days a week, and the other is the staff and finance committee, an entity that comes from the licensing need to have nominated people who buy the beer on behalf of the members. [It is] usually made of members with more experience of the nuts and bolts of keeping the place running who can make proposals to the general meeting. Their meetings are also open, though.

Then, on a day-to-day basis, the bulk of the work is taken on by two paid workers and the bar collective. There are twenty hours' paid work each week which cover things like counting takings, keeping accounts, stocking and running the cellar. The existence of paid workers is unappealing to some—at a social centers gathering I attended one person told me that they found the concept disempowering. We have found that it enables continuity around key areas of work that need to happen, like the accounting, and the understanding of cellar work. The café is completely volunteer-run, and the studio is self-supporting thanks to the bands that pass through. My role is a kind of admin co-ordinator. I keep the books, pay the bills, answer most enquiries, keep membership records, etc etc. I started coming to the club regularly in 2004. Began volunteering on the bar 2006, was club secretary in 2008, took on a paid role 2009.

What kind of building does the 1 in 12 occupy and what are the financial pressures?

The 1 in 12's home is a four-story converted building on a cobbled back-street tucked away surprisingly close to the town center. We're very fortunate that since we own the building we don't have to make rent, because over the years Leeds' thriving DIY music scene has tempted people away from what was once a populous scene, and the core community has dwindled somewhat. We're never exactly comfortable financially, and there are aspects of maintaining the aging building which demand formidable amounts of money. We were able to re-tile our roof thanks to the generosity of a member who came into some money, but the boiler is on its last legs. The lift hasn't been operational for 10 years or more and having that refurbished would be a big step forward in making the venue accessible.

How do you think the space regarded by the neighborhood, the city's authorities and various communities of Bradford and beyond it, generally? Is gentrification an issue in Bradford and if so what is the 1 in 12's relationship to those kinds of processes, if any?

The immediate neighborhood consists of a pretty friendly Polish shop who I think appreciate the business of the punks who choose to drink outside at festivals, and a solicitors who own the rest of the block and would probably very much like to see us gone. Even on the busiest nights of the year crowds are contained within a sloping

cobbled back street so we don't make much of an impact in terms of noise or disturbance. It's odd, the kind of place that even many Bradford residents won't really be able to locate when you mention the name, but for people involved in the activist or punk communities we're often known overseas. Activism at the club has from time to time led to police sniffing around and pressure from the licensing authorities, but at the same time Bradford is traditionally a safe Labour seat and rumour has it that we have advocates in high-ish places who cut their teeth at the club in their more radical days! The 1 in 12 is pretty white, not as multicultural as the general population of Bradford in terms of membership but I think anti-fascist activism and Mayday celebrations have definitely created community links.

I don't live in Bradford myself but beyond the local council's attempts to create a sort of pretty fountain and stone art gallery combo in the city center gentrification doesn't seem a huge presence—a few apartment developments in the city center here and there, but less of the sort of wholesale displacement as different areas become trendy. It's not a well-off city. I would say more typical of the recent Bradford experience is the attempted shopping center which ran out of money and just turned into a massive hole in the middle of the city for years.

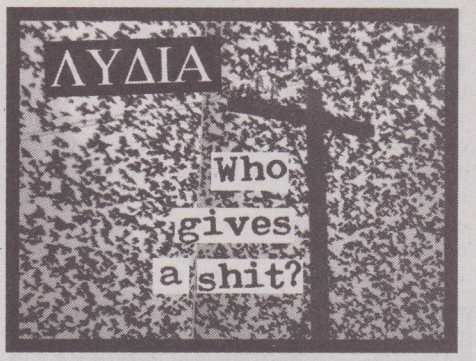
What are some memorable highlights of your involvement at the 1 in 12?

I started getting involved around the time of the first Means to an End festival and it's become a mainstay of the calendar. Blurry evenings in the pit and mornings sweeping up with a crushing hangover! Equalfest was also good when it took place in Bradford, trying to counter male domination of musical activities. We have had a bunch of great acoustic acts play in the library, like the jaw-dropping Richard Dawson from Newcastle. Local troubadour Captain Hotknives has been a good laugh when he's played—check out his Youtube video "The pigeons told me to shoplift," filmed in our library. It's also been great taking a marquee out into the city on Mayday and having gigs in the park.

What have been some of the biggest challenges in recent years and how securely do you see the future of the space?

The 1 in 12 has outlasted many a trendy bar thanks to having a good group of people who for the most part stick together and care about the place and through still being able to offer opportunities to socialize affordably, organize together, get creative and make music. If anything I think we are stronger in more troubled economic times. I have nightmares about new apartments going up in the wrong place and our activities being brought low by noise complaints, but fingers crossed.

Challenges have been things like a spate of burglaries a few years back, sets of keys being lost and the resulting security lockdown, and the occasional fallouts, factions and arguments that I'm sure almost any space faces. We also lost our good friend Protag to cancer recently, who had been a powerhouse of the place for many years and was tireless in the sound engineering / PA collective and keeping the place shipshape with maintenance.



"Lo único para que vivo es pasión."

July went by rather mildly, meeting friends for ramen, mapping about new projects, and listening to "no CDs, no mp3s, nothing but the hits, the hits, the hits, on JJ's original soul 45 rpm record show" on KPOO on Saturday nights. Staying home, saving money and trying to get into some kind of writing routine (fuck knows why, it's all rubbish rhetoric). There was a nice work-related surprise, which was getting free tickets to see Melt-Banana from Japan. I will go ahead and assume most of you know this band, and for those who don't (living under a rock maybe?) let me say they were mental live. They played for just under an hour, Yasuko's captivating stage presence, wicked sense of humor and untouchable vocals a sharp contrast to her soft-spoken voice in person. She held some kind of sampler or sound manipulator, which she waved about to the music, while Ichirou slammed out riff after crazy riff. A great pleasure to finally see them live, fifteen years after I first heard "Free the Bee." Arigato Revolver, arigato Melt-Banana.

August rolled in completely out of nowhere and before I knew it I was watching Total Control in an absolutely packed Knockout, sweating my tits off but stoked to be seeing TC again for the first time since the release of *Typical System*. I will be honest, they were not as…air-tight as I thought they would be. It's obvious they know how to play their shit, and it's much rawer, punker and guitar-driven, and fuck if their drummer is not impressive—an experience to watch.

Next day I was packing my bag Mr. Bean style to head down to LA. Well, Santa Ana actually. We set out on Friday with Syndicate (the Oakland band, check them out at syndicate-oakland.bandcamp.com), singing along to Polish punk and looking out for the In-N-Out arrow, feeling the temperature rise with every mile. By the time we got to Santa Ana we were all ready for a cold beer and…a hot tub apparently! Oh, the luxury! Good call Super 8.

OK, so this festival was not a punk festival, let's just get that out the way. Yes, it had punk bands playing (among other genres) and there were a lot of punks there, and the people running bits of it were in the punk world, but this was not a purely DIY punk festival, and I think everyone was aware of that. The Santa Ana Observatory is located kind of in the middle of nowhere, north of the beach and south of downtown. That area is block after block of office complexes, with tall trees and wide, three-lane roads. A train track cut through one of the main streets offering some sort of orientation point. No convenience stores, no bus or train stations, no banks or grocery stores; just Microsoft buildings, parking lots, Scion cars…and a Jack in the Box. A second point of reference as to where the fuck anything was located. Overall, I'd say if you don't have a car (or an Uber account?) in the greater LA area you are kinda screwed, though there was shuttle bus service of sorts provided by the organizers. There were also no ins-and-outs at the venue—which, yeh, never fun—so I directed my focus towards bands and catching up with friends from out of town. There were food trucks provided, but I was going through one of my "beer and smokes for me please" phase and preferred to feast on music surging through my brain at top volume instead. Combined with the heat (which I had missed) and the sun (which I always long for) I was feeling rather grand, engaging in friendly banter with new people, floating on a state of over-intoxicated stimulation.

I won't go into a detailed account of every band, because there were just too many, so some highlights include but are not limited to: Liebestod, aka Jesse Sanes, who created some truly tasteful experimental ambient noise sounds and growls. Prostitutes AKA James Donadio, a prolific "no trends" electronics project. Juanita y los Feos, obviously, were amazing! They are super tight as a band, the vocals are spine-chilling and the delivery was a joy to experience! Hoping they won't be disbanding completely; check out Rata Negra, featuring members of Juanita, also reviewed further down in these pages. The Lowest Form were a high point; blazing primitive noise made by deranged people. Helm, AKA Luke Younger, also a member of the Lowest Form, was the most stunning act to me; my attention firmly captive, the music engrossing, so much so for me that I actually transcended into some other dimension for most of the set, no other drug necessary. Lust for Youth, the electro-pop outfit punks don't wanna admit they love, were as dreamy and dancey as I hoped they would be (so not too much and just enough). Volhan, meaning Ritual Kaos and part of the Black Twilight Circle, play really sick, depressive black metal, influenced by early black/death metal, esoteric and traditional music sonically, but paying tribute to their Mayan heritage ideologically, addressing issues like colonialism, cultural suppression and sterilization. Definitely one to keep an eye on. Slægt from Denmark was the best new discovery for me, playing superb black metal, with death and NWOBHM details. Sick drummer, great riffs! And OK, so I'll be honest and say that I wasn't immediately grabbed by Vexx when I heard them on record, but I gained new perspective when I saw them live and I'll say, they are one of the sickest live bands in punk right now. They truly are something special and singer Mary Jane is the only person in punk today to remind me of pioneer Wendy O. Williams. See them live before it's too late! Total Control delivered a good set, but somehow didn't quite reach the ecstasy mark I was aiming for. It was great to see No Hope for the Kids, and hear all the classics, even if it was in the knowledge that this event was happening ten years too late in my life. I saw Dead Moon, but really didn't last long and walked out before their

set was over. (For shame, I know!) I also missed a bunch of bands (like Diät, Sissy Spacek, Puce Mary) and some were just really bad / "not my thing" so here are a couple honorable mentions: Fumigados, Appetite, Institute, Circuit Des Yeux, Destruction Unit, Royal Headache.

The first night I was to stay with ex-*MRR* coord and partner in crime Mariam. As I got lost in a maze of parking lots trying to find her car, I remembered how much I hated this type of nothing-suburbia, this kind of man-made setting, of which LA is the finest example. I looked left, then right, both sides seemingly the same fucking view: office buildings, blinking traffic lights and not a human in sight. However, I am glad I got a bit closer (albeit by car) to understanding the kind of environment that spawned LA and Orange Country hardcore and punk. Didn't visit Darby's grave this time either, but gotta have something on the to-do list for next time, right?

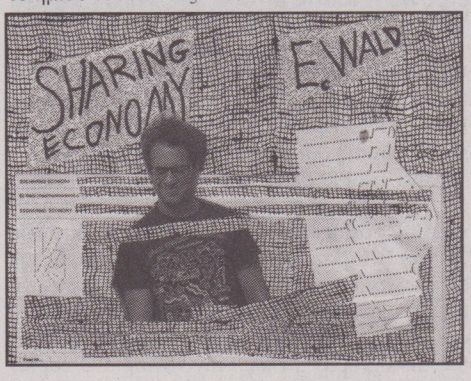
Merm and I hung out on her balcony drinking Maker's Mark and smoking splees, having a retrospective / reflective looks at our lives post-*MRR*. Leaving *MRR* is truly a form of break-up. You do something every day for three years and then you don't. You have to figure out new boundaries, learn to take a step back, train yourself not to worry about it, avoid feeling resentful for all the things you didn't manage to achieve. It's hard, I'll admit, and has been a source of much existential disorder for me these past few months. Time dependably soothing, memory deceptively selective. I haven't a clue what is to follow, I am open to ideas, but I'm glad *MRR* is part of my past and, for now at least, also my present and future. Let's see how long it'll be before I can feel as passionate about something as I do for *MRR*.

I wish I could say that I had some kind of epiphany that night, some kind of *apokalypsis*, but I didn't. I was obviously in search of one. I was however tremendously grateful to be around a human who knows me so well I barely have to utter words and she knows what's happening in my knotted brain. The transient nature of SF makes it sometimes hard for roots to grow deep and, much like with science-fiction being more about humans than aliens, traveling is often more about the connection you have to the place you are leaving rather than the place you're going to. "Gotta know where you're coming from to know where you're going," they say. "…but what the hell do they know anyway?!" I thought as I stared at the ceiling, hazy-minded and exhausted, the sky blood orange as the sun crept up behind the dark hills outside the window.

The next morning I woke up to the smell of fresh coffee and scrambled eggs. A breakfast feast was prepared (and speedily consumed) and we headed to the beach! I was excited to be by the sea again, and not only because the weather was hot and sunny—after all, this is SoCal—but also because the water there is actually warm enough that you can swim without the threat of hypothermia. (I once asked surfer and *MRR* shitworker John Downing—he helps this mag looks sick by doing layouts, among other things—how long a surfer could last in the water at Ocean Beach in SF if they got pulled in too far by the tide to swim to shore. He said *with* a wet suit, about 45 minutes. Scary shit for a hot-blooded Mediterraneo like me!)

We threw down out towels, set up our brolly and off I went, sunglasses still firmly attached to my face, ready for a dip. As I shimmied underwater, flooded by memories of summers past, I started to think of the concept of change, and how resistant we are to it sometimes. I lay on my back, nothing but my nose above water, and cried just a little bit as I enjoyed the stillness of the world beneath the waves, so happy to find some momentary peace.

I planned for a week off work after a weekend of decadence, stories of which I won't bore you with, and treated myself to a spa session, sushi in Japantown, cocktails in Chinatown, excellent company (hi Paco, miss you Martin!) and the experience of being a tourist in my own city. I also got a few dozen thousand words down for a project I'm working on and made my first three pieces of (albeit electronic) music *ever*. I won't go into the reasons why I had not attempted this before, they're thoroughly boring, but a whole new universe of creativity opened up for me none the less, and I'm more than ready to explore. In fact, I'm only just getting started. Thank you Jason and Will for that extra boost. Η αρχή είναι το ήμισυ του παντός.



NOTHING WAS DELIVERED

"Now you must provide some answers / for what you sell has not been received / and the sooner you come up with them / The sooner you can leave"

Is there any interesting way to write about going to the post office? I wasn't so sure, but my colleagues here told me to write this month's column about my experiences with the USPS. I guess that's my area of expertise as this mag's distribution coordinator. Is there anything more inherently mundane, punishing and predictable? It may be the lowest common denominator of annoyance for punks. Even if you think death can't touch you and taxes are unjust, you're probably still wondering if it's cheaper to send a 7" first-class or media mail.

Subscribers may have noticed a few small changes in the packaging of the magazine in the last few months. To wit: a switch to catalog envelopes from shrink wrap; different stamps in new corners of the mag; and last month, an awkwardly placed sticker on the front saying "OR CURRENT OCCUPANT" somewhere near the name of the recipient. All of these are because *MRR* has taken advantage of our old bulk-mailing permit to use another postal class for subscriptions. It means a little more work on our end, presorting and bundling mailings, but saves us a lot of time and money in the long run. If Tim and the Gang were able to figure it out in the '80s, we're certainly up to the task in the twenty-teens, right?

We have it mostly figured out, but at this point we have a running joke. If the phone rings with someone asking for "Ellie" instead of "Eli," it's probably the post office, and something's gotten fucked up. Usually the paperwork is off by a couple digits, and I have to clear the edit on the phone or come into the post office and pencil in the changes. Sometimes it is more involved. We got a call a couple weeks ago, the day we dropped off issue #389. As it turns out when sending out a bulk mailing you need to either include the phrase "OR CURRENT OCCUPANT" next to the name of each recipient for every mailing, or register your address list online for automatic correction. I thought I had everything sorted out after using the new mailing system without a hitch for about four months, but without this text we'd either need to send out the whole mailing first class (at a four figure expense to the magazine) or put another sticker on each and every copy of the mag.

This seemed ridiculous—couldn't we just add the text next time? Why wasn't this a problem the last three months? I got a supervisor on the phone (typing that makes me feel like a piece of shit), who told me that we could be charged retroactively for old mailings that hadn't had the sticker. Couldn't I just do my dumb job in peace, without bullshit bureaucratic threats? I asked why we'd be on the hook now when everyone had been telling us for months that we were in the clear. "Imagine you're driving a car," he told me. "If I only catch you speeding just now, does that mean you get away with speeding before when no one noticed?" I didn't want to point this out when there were thousands of dollars on the line for the magazine, but I don't know if that's how traffic stops actually work. More importantly, are you a cop?

It was a surprising turn—just when I thought I'd charmed everybody at the Business Mail Entry Unit—but I should be accustomed to surprises at the post office by now. When we send out international distribution orders, we drop off the mags at a place called the San Francisco ISC. It's a big warehouse near the rental car return of the airport. No one seems to be in charge, you just drop off your paperwork in some corner of the warehouse, leave the magazines in a pushcart and hope they don't get mixed up with someone else's shipment of live gamecocks or queen bees. I'm usually taken aback at what other people are putting in the mail, but whoever's shipping live animals in international mailings is probably just as surprised to hear that we're sending out a magazine—about punk music, no less.

RENAISSANCE FAIR

"Hear ye the crying of the vendors / Fruit for sale, wax candles for to burn / Fires flare, soon it will be nightfall / I think that maybe I'm dreaming"

About punk music: does 2015 mark the fortieth anniversary of punk? I thought punk was like everyone's weird coworker who's too anxious about aging to tell anyone their birthday. San

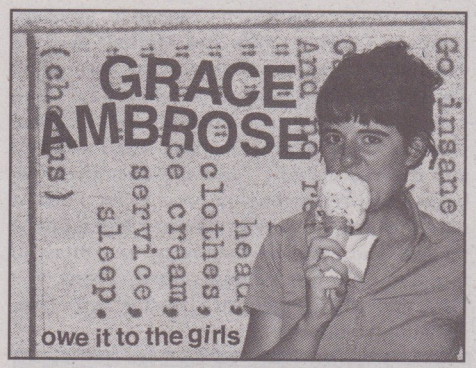
Francisco's Punk Rock Sewing Circle, a collective of old punks getting the figurative band back together, are confident in the 1975 birth date and as such are making this week's San Francisco Punk Renaissance: Final Warning festival a birthday party of sorts.

Most of the fest falls after the columns deadline, so I'm left to project its contents. What do we mean when we talk about a renaissance? Is putting on a leather jacket so similar to putting on a puffy shirt? What kind of renaissance are we talking about here? When I hear "renaissance," one of the things I think of is the development of techniques like perspective and polyphony, propelling the arts onward and upward. I also think of the emergence from the "dark ages," an end to the epoch of plague-ridden children thrown wantonly unto the pikes and broadswords of mad crusaders. Hope for the future and technical ability would seem to have very little to do with a movement like punk. All that aside, the arts are flourishing this week. In addition to the film and photography exhibits (ill), reunion sets (hmm) and panel discussions (ugh) the fest is presenting one night of "NEW PUNK", a three-band gig at El Rio ("Your Dive") co-presented with Scott Alcoholocaust. I understand the fest is a reunion of sorts, but I'd still say NEW PUNK is proportionally underrepresented here. We see a lot more than one night's worth here at the mag, for better or for worse. If I can carve out the time I'll hit up the photo exhibit. But I live for NEW PUNK.

One of my favorite bands in the Bay Area NEW PUNK scene is a four-piece called Rays. Rays includes players from other projects out of San Francisco's bar scene: Turner, Life Stinks, Violent Change. Different sonic territory than any of those bands however, and worth following to the darkest corners of this city. Recently I saw them play to half a dozen people in the basement of Vacation, a vintage store in the Tenderloin managed by and for San Francisco's human coke mirror scene. Unlike that scene, Rays are anti-performative and understated in their approach. They excel in organ-driven, occasionally blippy psychedelic repetition that sounds like it could have been dug from an early '80s Xpressway catalog or something on the cutting room floor of some Rough Trade-era Fall sessions, managing to find a way to make it fit in the two-and-a-half-minute frame of a punk song. Both vocalists excel at delivering "Drop Dead" (one of their tracks, this band does not play Siege covers) menace in monotone delivery, making the threat that much more earnest. As of tonight their output only exists on Soundcloud (rough practice takes) and Vimeo (that aforementioned Vacation gig). Nothing on bandcamp or youtube for you fucking plebs. I think they're almost done recording for a legit demo or 7".

Half of Rays also play saxophone for another Bay Area NEW PUNK revelation, called the World. That's two saxophone players, probably the right number for a punk band. Neither plays too many notes in any given song, neither solos. Andy Human is on guitar, playing in a complementary spidery style. I don't know what assurances I need to make due to the instrumentation here. Do you know what syncopation is? Do you like Essential Logic? Do you like Kleenex? Merely hearing about this band's lineup assured me that they'd be in my Bay Area top five list, hopefully I can convey the same excitement to you here. Someone's inevitably going to tell me the Bay has no good bands; I'll tell them that they *"need to see the World"* then make a mic-drop gesture. They're also in the middle of recording. If in the meantime you want to try to find a video of them live online (good luck searching "WORLD MUSIC") that's up to you. These are the dark ages, but The World is yours.

eli@maximumrocknroll.com



Los Crudos, por vida.

We are basically one hundered percent sold out of the Crudos discography here at the compound. If you haven't picked up your copy, act fast, or get one from your local record store or distro.

Most people don't know, but in addition to the normal money woes that come along with running a print magazine (ha) about punk music (ha!) in 2015 San Francisco (HA!), *Maximum* has been carrying around a big ol' debt for nearly fifteen years. Thanks to the incredible generosity of Crudos (who donated *all* of the profits from the discography to us, only taking 100 copies of the record for themselves), we've been able to pay off that debt and put some money in the bank. We're not outta the woods yet—this is still a fucking expensive proposition with gigantic bills every month—but we have a little bit of a safety net for the first time in a long time. A huge, huge thank you to the band!

Thanks are also due to everyone who worked on the compilation: Mariam got the process started and wrote killer liner notes, reminding us all that, yes, the Midwest is best. Lydia steered the record and print material through production—thanks also to our friends at Lucky Lacquers and Imprint for their help! As with everything she writes, Golnar Nikpour's liner notes reminded me to think broadly and analytically about punk, and we couldn't have gotten the whole thing put together without Lena Tahmassian's watchful Spanish grammar eye, correcting our misplaced accents and translating the lyrics. Everything's a team effort here and a ton of shitworkers helped stuff and pack the records under Eli's supervision. Thanks to every fucker who bought one, especially to those who waited a long time for their copies. (No thanks to the endless delays at the pressing plant!).

Los Crudos records should be in print forever and ever and I'm thrilled, honored, and endlessly grateful to have been able to collaborate with the band in this way.

Two fingers, three strings.

So a joke became reality and suddenly I found myself in a band called Mozart. This is my first "real" punk band and I gotta say, the sensation of recording your music and then hearing it played back is a pretty wild one. A lot of you are rolling your eyes at me, cause this is old news to you, but ladies and freaks of the world, if you haven't been clued into this secret that all the boring-ass boy bands have been keeping from us, let me tell you: Recording your music and then hearing it played back is the coolest feeling in the entire world.

You know how listening to the sound of your own voice is one of the purest forms of torture? I listen to episodes of *MRR* Radio and vow to never open my mouth again. I expected to feel the same way about music, thought I would hate hearing my rudimentary two-finger guiitar playing as much as I hate hearing my own voice. I was wrong. I fucking love listening to my own band. Sue me. I listen to our tape on the way to work, at my desk, driving around in the van...I'm sure I'll get sick of it soon, but that day hasn't yet come.

The other day I was laying in bed, listening to the rough mixes on headphones. We have this one song that we secretly call "The Bummer." The goal is to play it until we all feel hella uncomfortable, and then play it for a few minutes more. I kept dozing off and waking back up and I got a little panicky, like *is this song ever gonna end?!* I felt super fucked up and disoriented and that was the moment when I was like "Yeah, OK. I really, *really* like our band." It's cool if you don't, but if you do, tapes will be available from Sorry State (US) and Muscle Horse (UK) distros very soon. Hopefully I'll have gotten my shit together enough to dub them by the time you read this. Thanks to Marissa and Jackson and Eli for doing this thing with me. I'm psyched.

San Francisco's...Doomed? Alright?

The bus start-up is folding and selling their fleet—starting bid $5 a vehicle!—but toast still costs almost $5 on our block, so the end times for capitalism and tech bros haven't fully arrived yet. Come help us make the Bay Area feel uninhabitable for norms Feburary 10th through 14th, when we host a bunch of stacked punk gigs in a row...I guess you could call it a fest. Get in touch if you have questions: fest@maximumrocknroll.com. More info soon!

I'm also feeling inspired by the opening of an collectively-run punk venue in South London. DIY Space for London is up and running! Yes! If they can do it in that expensive behemoth of a city we can do it in ours...

Write to me at grace@maximumrocknroll.com, but only if you're not a man asking me to explain feminism to you. My inbox is full of that crap. Zzzzzzzzz.

SIX TWO FIVE

!!OUT NOW!!

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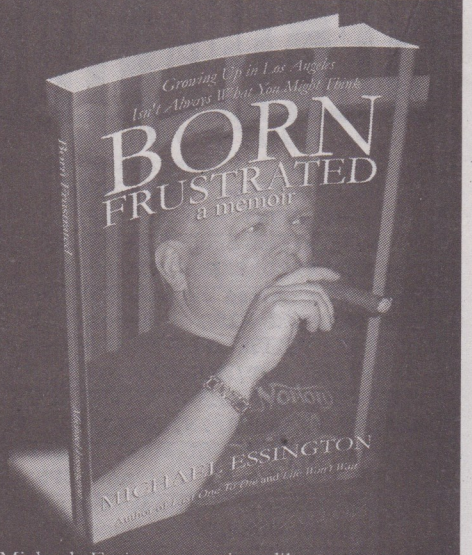

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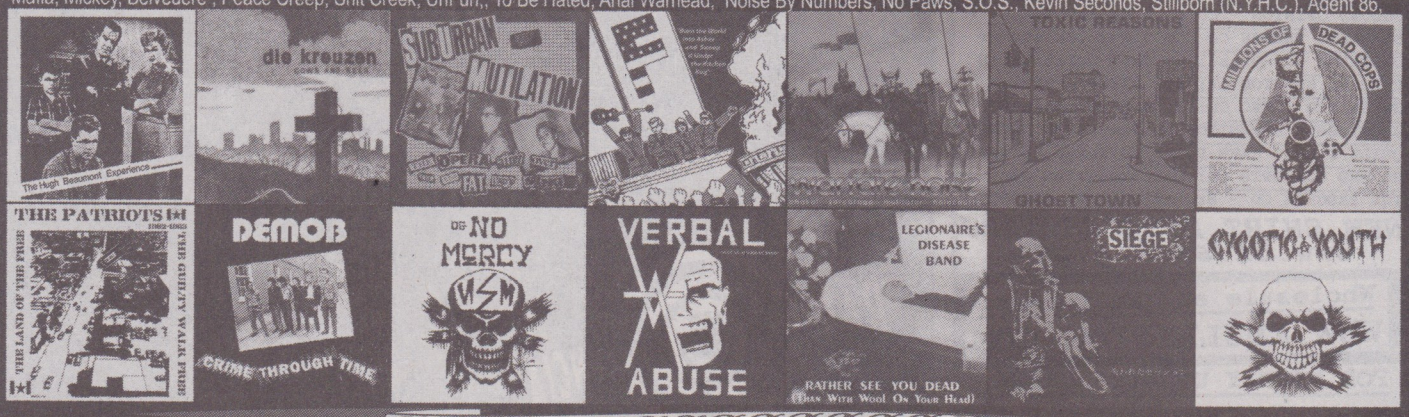

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MERCENÁRIAS

When we talk about classic Brazilian punk, some bands are really well-known worldwide. The '80s were a crazy decade in Brazil for underground rock in general. Perhaps because the military dictatorship in Brazil was in downfall, everything related to youth culture got a boost. One of the most remarkable bands was definitely As Mercenárias.

Many post-punk bands popped up in Brazil in a short period and quickly becamee dated, like so much stuff created in the '80s. But not As Mercenárias. Their songs took the straightforward DIY punk approach one step further thanks to their strange and diverse musical influences, challenging our ears even today. They became the first ever all-female punk band to have a recording in Brazil. They belonged to a period in the early Brazilian punk years when bands dared to challenge all punk aesthetics, boosting a weird shock in their own scene.

In this interview I talked to Sandra, who still plays in As Mercenárias as the only original member. I also spoked with Edgard, who only played on their first demo tape from 1983—now reissued on a 7" by Dama da Noite and Nada Nada Discos—and left the band to play with his other band, Ira! Both are the only ones still involved in music.

Interview and introduction by Lucas Campacci. Photos by Rui Mendes.

MRR: TELL ME ABOUT SÃO PAULO IN THE EARLY '80S. HOW DID YOU ENTER THE PUNK SCENE?

Sandra: I was searching for a language. I played piano and studied in a music school, but I was somewhat distanced from all of that. I went to a show in Bom Retiro [a São Paulo neighborhood] that a few friends were filming. It was a punk show and I saw the Inocentes. I was impressed by their attitude and relationship to the audience. At that time I was already informed about different sounds and I went searching for friends to join in. Needing to express ourselves, we started to compose our first songs.

One day Edgard came to my house and saw a rehearsal. He was super excited about the project and we needed a drummer. He offered to join in and started rehearsing by beating on a metal ladder and kicking a cardboard box and a telephone book, because we had no drums.

Then we opened for Ira!'s in 1982, at a place called Rosa Proibida. Edgard was the glue that held us together and he introduced a new drum language to the scene. This was our beginning.

songs sounded and the arrangements were was something very different.

I think it was a good time for rock'n'roll here in Brazil, because there were few people that were really into punk; there was still a lot of that stuff from the 1970's, a lot of progressive rock. And rock in Portuguese was very downtrodden, because it was very badly recorded and with very naïve lyrics by the bands. When the punk scene came along, it opened up a space for many new things for the Brazilian public. I think it worked so well because the Brazilian bands, even though they had great references in English and American bands, were doing a lot of different things back then. Ira! was very different from Mercenárias, which was different from Inocentes, Ratos de Porão, Cólera, Smack, Voluntários Da Pátria. They were bands that were very different from one another.

MRR: WHAT BANDS DID YOU LISTEN TO AT THAT TIME WHICH MIGHT HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR STYLE?

Sandra: The men always had a vast collection of records; they talked

MRR: WHAT LANGUAGE WAS THAT?

Sandra: I don't know, but it was a very original language. He was already a guitar player and because he is left-handed, he played the guitar the other way around. I think he gave the drums the language of a guitar. There was already something different in the band: Ana's guitar, my bass lines and Rosália's vocals.

Edgard: When I heard the music without the drums, I already knew that it was all was very different. That is why, when I went to play with them, I knew that I would have to think outside the box in order to play something interesting on top of those songs. There were multiple different things going on, with guitar phrases that were answered by bass phrases. All that suggested drum beats that played together and talked with these arrangements.

Sandra: Take the song "Santa Igreja," a more classic punk song. You'll notice that the drums already have a few add-ons, a different tone. That was special for the start of the band.

Edgard: It has a certain strange feel to it.

MRR: EDGARD, WHEN YOU FIRST HEARD AS MERCENÁRIAS REHEARSING, DID IT REMIND YOU OF SOMETHING?

Edgard: No. It's funny because there was a lively scene going on at that time, and they did not remind me of anything that was going on. But I felt something that came from punk and post-punk. I felt many aggressive elements that came from punk, though it was a sound unlike anything I had heard before. The guitar, the screaming vocals, and the powerfully provocative protest lyrics were part of the punk language, but the way the

amongst themselves and knew who the drummer of such-and-such's band was, for example. The women, on the other hand, did not care so much about this, so we ended up listening to what they were recording. But I had a few albums that influenced me a lot, like Patti Smith, Nina Hagen, Lou Reed. Not exactly because of the sound—I never copied anything from Nina Hagen's sound. But her attitude! There were important bands that we listened to and which influenced us in some way or another: Dead Kennedys, Gang of Four...

Edgard: Everyone that listened to Gang of Four was playing differently the next day. We had a friend who was very attuned [to the musical trends of the world] and he had some Miles Davis and listened to these very sophisticated songs; he treated Gang of Four as sophisticated music. We would go to his house to listen to Gang of Four and we would listen to this strange, dry sound. This influenced us a lot.

MRR: WE WERE AT THE END OF THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN 1983. HOW WERE RECORDS AND POLITICAL IDEAS AND INFORMATION REACHING YOU?

Sandra: As soon as [the dictatorship] fell, everyone started speaking up. I felt the dictatorship in the university, where one could not speak about Communism and people's phones were tapped. I was a part of the student movement and was a Trotskyist at the time! I was arrested, and so was Ana [the guitar player]. We were a part of this mobilization period, of people going out into the streets.

Edgard: Punk helped me attain a level of political clarity that I did not have until then. I came from a lower middle class family and many things that

happened in the basements of the dictatorship were unknown to us. My late father was a member of ARENA (the military dictatorship's political party) and he believed that Communists should go to jail. I did not know how to judge all of that correctly; I confused anarchy with fascism; I was kind of nuts back then. It was the punk scene and As Mercenárias that helped me to have a better understanding of politics, human rights, and freedom of expression. For me and for many others around here, it was only through punk that we understood the military dictatorship.

Sandra: But it was all still very distorted for us. There was still some level of naiveté; we would hang up that flag of As Mercenárias with the anarchist "A" turned on its end. Because we received this information from outside the anarchist movements, from punk, the Sex Pistols...the aesthetics, really.

MRR: BUT INSIDE THE PUNK SCENE, YOU WERE REALLY ABLE TO WORK WITH THIS "DO-IT-YOURSELF" ATTITUDE.

Sandra: "Do-it-yourself"; you learn by yourself. Only later on did we learn about "do-it-yourself" as a justification for our actions. We did not know anything about this as a philosophy. Our first composition—the song "Thrashland"—was minimalist. We composed it little by little; only later on did I find out what minimalism and "do-it-yourself" were.

I prepared the fanzines because I wanted people to know the lyrics, because I knew the equipment was always bad and Rosália screamed and no one understood the words. I had this preoccupation. It was the beginning of Xerox machines; there was only one store to make copies in and I had to cross the entire city to do that. Everything was starting and evolving.

Edgard: We had to struggle a lot at that time because there were not many means of communication. We had to do it ourselves because there wasn't any other way to do it. If the band didn't do anything, it would fall into oblivion.

Sandra: An alternative press was growing at that time; it was the growth of this culture.

MRR: DID YOU FACE ANY PROBLEMS FOR BEING A BAND COMPRISED MOSTLY OF WOMEN? AS FAR AS I KNOW, YOU WERE THE FIRST FEMALE PUNK BAND TO RECORD IN BRAZIL.

Sandra: At first, I think they thought Edgard was the bandleader just because he was a man. They thought the band was a concept created by him, not us. I felt this when we were out doing shows; they thought we did not have any technical ability because we were women. But, as soon as we started playing, they would lose these prejudices.

Edgard: The songs imposed respect.

MRR: I KNOW OF MANY OLDER PUNKS WHO HAD CERTAIN MISGIVINGS AND NEGATIVE PRE-CONCEPTIONS ABOUT AS MERCENÁRIAS, PARTICULARLY DURING THE START OF THE BAND.

Sandra: This happened at our first show. They would keep their backs to us, João Gordo (Ratos de Porão) and the others. But, as soon as Rosália entered and started to sing like an animal, they respected her. João Gordo himself said, "This is more punk than the punks!" And, in a certain way, it was, because our sound was not only distorted and ferocious, it was broken up. For them, this went beyond punk's 4-by-4. We were soon respected.

"BUT I FELT SOMETHING THAT CAME FROM PUNK AND POST-PUNK. I FELT MANY AGGRESSIVE ELEMENTS THAT CAME FROM PUNK, THOUGH IT WAS A SOUND UNLIKE ANYTHING I HAD HEARD BEFORE. THE GUITAR, THE SCREAMING VOCALS, AND THE POWERFULLY PROVOCATIVE PROTEST LYRICS WERE PART OF THE PUNK LANGUAGE, BUT THE WAY THE SONGS SOUNDED AND THE ARRANGEMENTS WERE WAS SOMETHING VERY DIFFERENT.

MRR: HERE IN SÃO PAULO THERE WAS ALSO SOME CONFLICT IN THE EARLY '80S BETWEEN THOSE WHO PLAYED PUNK AND THOSE WHO PLAYED POST-PUNK, RIGHT?

Edgard: There was something radical going on here. If the music had a guitar solo, it was not punk anymore; if it had drum fills, idem. If it had a tuned backing vocal, it wasn't punk as well. There were many rules for something to be punk. Furthermore, if you were not from Carolina [a working-class neighborhood in São Paulo] or from ABC [the working-class satellite cities around São Paulo], you were not punk. If you were a punk who lived in the South-End [richer part of São Paulo], you were already considered a daddy's boy; there were a lot of prejudices. However, looking at

it today, I actually think that was good, because it consolidated the scene in a radical way. Sometimes musical scenes must be radical in order to exist and not become diluted. At the time, however, it was a defense mechanism used by people who did not how to play very well.

At the first show of my other band, Ira!, we made a flyer with the words "Punk Rock / New Wave" on it because, for us, it was the same thing. A famous punk zine was then released with the headline: "Ira!, the Fake Punks." In that zine they explained that we had played a song with a guitar solo and a drum fill, and had played a reggae song, calling on people to fight against these "fake punks." We felt confortable with playing reggae and calling ourselves punk. We did not feel we did not have to know how to play in order to be punk.

Sandra: It was a question of social class, really. Punk was from poorer neighborhoods, from the outskirts. I got to the point where I would go to the city center in order to sniff glue with the girls and get closer to the scene. But the groups were different, they had different mentalities.

MRR: NONETHELESS, THIS EXCHANGE BETWEEN THESE TWO GROUPS FROM DIFFERENT SOCIAL CLASSES IS QUITE INTERESTING. WHEN I TALKED TO ALEX ANTUNES [A MUSIC JOURNALIST], HE SAID SOMETHING INTERESTING TO ME, THAT THE OLD GENERATION INFLUENCED YOU A LOT, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, THEY ALSO LEARNED MANY NEW THINGS FROM THE NEWER GENERATION. ACCORDING TO HIM, YOU GUYS GAVE A DIONYSIAN TOUCH TO PUNK MUSIC AND, TOGETHER WITH THE NEW CLUBS THAT OPENED UP TO THE GAY AND DARK UNIVERSE, YOU GAVE A NEW DIVERSITY TO THE SCENE THAT WAS TABOO FOR MANY PUNKS.

Edgard: Yes. It was a crazy mixture. People started seeing everything, especially because of Madame Satã [a club in São Paulo]. This really kicked off the diversity of people within the underground scene. I believe we were responsible for an Erik Satie injection in punk rock, since we started to show something a little different, with the intention of being strange and shocking people. I did not feel we were part of a scene different from that of the periphery punks, those from poorer neighborhoods. My commitment was much more musical than that of social class. I was not a factory worker; I never had to work as an office boy. I never had much money, but I still did not know what that was.

"THE LYRICS CAME ABOUT BECAUSE THE PUNKS BLEW IT AT USP [SÃO PAULO UNIVERSITY]. WHEN THE ANARCHISTS WON THE STUDENT BODY ELECTIONS, THEY DECIDED TO ORGANIZE A PARTY THERE AND CALLED A FEW PUNK BANDS TO PLAY.

MRR: SO MUCH SO THAT AS MERCENÁRIAS' SONG "INIMIGO" IS ABOUT THIS CONFLICT, IS IT NOT?

Sandra: The lyrics came about because the punks blew it at USP [São Paulo University]. When the anarchists won the student body elections, they decided to organize a party there and called a few punk bands to play. I think Inocentes went, and one other band. They got into a fight with everyone and broke everything there. The song talks about the fact that they were destroying and fighting people who were not oppressing them. It is about attacking things/people who are not the true oppressors. The real enemy was the same one, for them and for us.

Edgard: It is about channeling the anger towards the real oppressor.

MRR: WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE DEMO TAPE THAT WAS JUST REISSUED AS A 7"?

Edgard: We had rehearsed a lot and wanted to play a show. It was very important to have a tape of your work in order to book a show here [in São Paulo]. So we recorded a demo in a studio that did not have the faintest idea about recording rock. Truth be told, there wasn't a studio here that knew how to record rock. I think that was the first time that I actually touched

a real drum kit. So much so that I came up with more things during the rehearsals than during the recording, because I was afraid of making up too many things during drum fills and not be able to go back to the beat later on—we only had four hours to record!
Sandra: The studio was huge. We recorded the instruments the first day and the voices the second. But it came out very nicely; it was a crude record, very straightforward. This is what I feel we tend to lose in music. When I listen to these old recordings, I like them because I see the innocence and purity of it all. It's as if it were "the so-called empty heart of the stage."

MRR: TWO YEARS LATER YOU RECORDED YOUR FIRST ALBUM WITH BARATOR & AFINS, AN INDIE LABEL FROM SÃO PAULO. WHAT CHANGED FROM THE DEMO TO THE FIRST ALBUM?
Sandra: I think there are a couple of differences. Rosália had written lyrics that were more visionary, trippier, but I was going towards a more direct approach, as in the song "Santa Igreja."
Edgard: I had already left the band but, at that time, we had a different goal

[from that of other bands] and when we started seeing what post-punk was we started evolving our sound. We saw no reason to make records that were the same; we had a musical goal that was a bit different.
Sandra: We had a different musical background. I had studied music and played the piano; I had this thing where I always tried to bring in something new, because what is new helps shape or alter some part of our sensibility. When you have to look at the [musical] possibilities that are not standard, you start seeing the possibilities you have in terms of your own internal changes. I think art has this transformational power, and the band's configuration catalyzed this. Each one of us had a different background and we made use of this in constructing our music.

MRR: YOUR SECOND ALBUM WAS RECORDED WITH A BIG RECORDING COMPANY. HOW WAS THAT?
Sandra: They contacted us after they saw that we had sold a considerable amount within the ***underground*** scene. So they came after us. So we imposed our demands, because we did not wish to fall into the hands of agents. So much so that we demanded that Edgard and our friend Thomas Pappon be our producers.

MRR: WHAT OTHER BANDS FROM THAT TIME WOULD YOU RECOMMEND?
Edgard: There was a lot of cool stuff around and many bands had a surprising amount of technological sophistication for the time. There were bands that were a bit trippier, with longer songs, like Smack. There were bands with a more electronic sound, such as Agentss, which had a robotic feel and a concern with looks and lighting. Those who were attending the nightclubs at that time know that it was a transformational moment in Brazil's rock history. There are parts that were unique to each band, but the composed something universal from that specific scene.
Sandra: I consider all the bands from that time as being good, because all of them had their own personality. I think it is quite interesting that you can listen to any song from that time period and know what band it is from, because they are very characteristic of each group. The '80s was very rich in this sense.

MRR: INDEED, THERE WERE BANDS THAT DIFFERED VERY MUCH FROM EACH OTHER AT THAT TIME. THAT IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT MUSIC PRODUCTION IN BRAZIL HAD BEEN UP TO THAT POINT.
Edgard: Music in Portuguese used to come from Caetano Veloso's acoustic guitar and from popular Brazilian music, from baião to the berimbau, so the sudden appearance of a distorted guitar was like kicking the door in. And all this with added discourse and another type of singing, without that trembling voice, much more direct. The transformation from the end of the '70s to the '80s was very strong. So much so that, for a lot of people, the '80s are not over yet. So many things happened back then that you could live your entire life just remembering them.

MRR: THE END OF THE '80S WAS ALSO THE END OF AS MERCENÁRIAS. WHY DID THE BAND FINISH?
Sandra: When the record company terminated our agreement and we didn't get any money, we went through a lot of stress. We had fought many years, had not gained much and life had to go on...And I was starting to question the language myself. I was tired of short songs with beginning, middle, end. I was heading towards a more experimental phase.

So I went to Germany and started to put into practice what I wanted: songs with free improvisations. I was very far from the language of rock'n'roll. I started moving towards experimental and electronic music. I had to do this outside of Brazil, because at that time it was not possible to make this type of music in Brazil. Now, these types of things are getting bigger over here...

MRR: WHAT ARE THE OTHER ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF AS MERCENÁRIAS UP TO THESE DAYS? ARE YOU STILL IN CONTACT WITH THEM? FROM WHAT I KNOW, ONLY YOU AND EDGARD CONTINUED PLAYING MUSIC.
Sandra: Each one of us went our own way. Ana [guitar] is a journalist and a vegan activist. Lou [drummer] became Leo, an LGBT activist who works with theater. Rosália, I am not sure, but I think she works with literature. We each followed our own path.

As Mercenárias was a special moment for them, but they did not have an artistic/musical goal in mind. On the other hand, I wanted to pursue it.

MRR: ANY FINAL WORDS?
Edgard: There was a famous rock producer here in Brazil called Pena Schmidt. He saw a show where As Mercenárias opened for another band, in 1985. I went up to him and asked what he thought about the show. He said, "I thought it was nice, but this is music which should be heard in 20 or 30 years." At the time, I didn't like his opinion. But he is right—30 years later and there is someone interested in our first demo tape!

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NOT DEAD YET

Greg Benedetto is a get-things-done kinda punk. He plays in S.H.I.T., runs SHIBGBs, and organizes Not Dead Yet, a 100% DIY punk and hardcore fest that takes over the city of Toronto every fall. We talked about getting into the booking game, navigating mainstream media coverage, the importance of community, and why he keeps doing this year after year.

Introduction and interview by Grace Ambrose. Photos provided by Angela Owens.

What's your punk origin story? What was your first punk show? Do you remember the first gig you ever booked?
My first show was a friend's brother's band, in her parents' backyard for her birthday. There, I got a flyer to a "real gig" which was a punk "prom" in a church hall. There was a guy in my hometown who convinced a priest to let him book the hall for one Saturday a month, so after the first gig, I'd go to "the church" regularly. This was all around the post-Grade era of Southern Ontario Hardcore so shows were pretty big and frequent. After moving to downtown Toronto, I eventually started helping friends with gigs every once in a while. When I was in my late teens there were a lot of people doing a lot of great stuff in Toronto.

Most bands didn't know who I was so they had no reason to trust me and most were afraid of the border. It was really hard to get bands to roll through. The first band to trust me on my own to do a gig was the First Step. I knew nothing about the border and didn't provide them paperwork, but they got across. At the end of the show I forgot to count out the float that I put in and gave it to them. They probably shouldn't have trusted me, but they did, so I could say to people "I did the First Step's show here," and look at me now!

Booking gigs can be a thankless job. You spend a lot of time at the door taking money while the band you brought to town plays out of sight and sometimes out of earshot. Why do you do it? What do you think the role of a promoter is in the context of a punk scene? If you had to summarize your show-booking ethos, how would you describe it?
Well, why I do it now and why I started doing it are two different things, I suppose. I started booking all ages gigs because I felt like I was one of the youngest folks in the room and at 20/21 years old, that felt backwards to me. I also felt that lots of bands I wanted to see would skip Toronto on their tours or just straight up not come up here. I mean, there were a lot of great gigs happening around '04-'06, but it started to slow a bit in '07. There was always the odd gig here and there in the city, but nothing that was as big as what was going on before. So that's why I started doing it.

Eventually, when it first started feeling like too much, I said, "I'll stop when someone else starts making these gigs happen." And now all that has happened. There have consistently been young kids in bands in Toronto for the last eight years—bands started by teens like Molested Youth, Total Trash, Direct Approach, Cunt Punt, Wrong Generation and now Belt Fight. And kids from all those bands are still around and going to gigs and are involved and are in subsequently much better bands. That's been especially cool to watch. But I guess with the venue and festival, I became a bit more committed despite starting to feel like I could slow down on the booking. But with the space now especially, it's been nothing more than trying to take my means and what I've learned and put it back in to the city some more. That's it. All I really want is to have a strong, positive scene for folks to come up and hang out in.

I think really all a "promoter" is is a facilitator, that's it. Anyone can (and should) be a promoter, and if a scene is strong, everyone will be better off for it. In doing so many gigs for so long, the goal has been so many things: to "make punk bigger" in the city, to take up more space—and I mean take up more space for everyone to experience an alternative culture that is hopefully a gateway to something better than what they've got. Be it a gateway to learn about different ideas or a night away from a shitty household or something to do on a Friday

night with their friends, to give punks in this city a place to grow and call their own, to give them something to always look forward to.

It's all derivative of believing something didn't exist and then trying to create it. If there are no shows that represent your politics (that shows should be all ages or accessible and provide a platform for music that confronts the status quo or, at the very least, music that is unpretentious) then you have to make them happen. If there are no venues that represent your ideal space, then you have to create one. If there are no bands you like, then you have to start one. Personally, I really like the idea of achieving this with quiet focus, but that's me.

Punk "promoters" do everyone a disservice if they are not community organizers first and foremost. It's all well and good to book shows for bands on tour—but if you are not actively engaging with the other voices in your city's punk community, you're fucking it up. I've been reminded of this lately as I've watched G.L.O.S.S. tour North America. It seems that their best (biggest) shows have been in cities where you have a good mix of old guard engaged with the youth—and where the youth is taking over. I look at a spot like Toronto, or Boston, or DC, and the bands that are playing these shows are bands that are always playing shows in these cities. And they are representative of groups that are otherwise frequently marginalized in HC punk-at-large. That's not to say that problems are solved in so far as racism, transphobia, or homophobia. But I think it's important to see that the scene is strong in some places, weak in others and try to understand why. In the case of Toronto, VCR and Fathers played, and those are bands that play SHIBGBs frequently. In Boston, Leather Daddy, Dame, Gas Station Girls and Firewalker all played. While some of those bands are newish, they are playing a lot of gigs in Boston with lots of different bands. In DC, Pure Disgust and ICE are playing and the same can be said about those bands. Philly too, with HIRS and Chondria. This is a thumbs up I guess to the folks who are listening to their communities and creating space for folks who are queer, trans & POC. It's also a thumbs up to all the folks who are fighting for themselves and using HC to make their voice in those communities heard.

Long story short is that I really appreciate the opportunity that folks in my city give me to try and do what I do. I try to do my best to do right by everyone who is invested in punk and HC in our city. And that's what I mean about community organizing. It's my responsibility, if I want to book shows on the reg, to be listening to new young bands, to be paying attention. I see the festival as this broader opportunity to do the same thing, not just for my city but for punk at large.

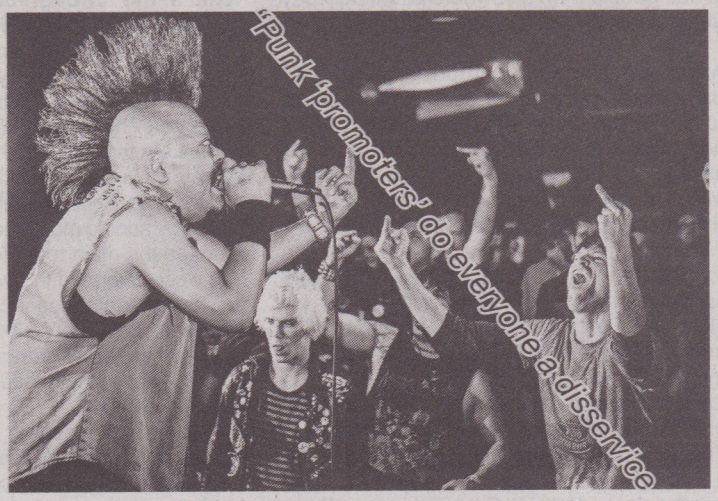
I actually think referring to myself as a promoter without this context is really stupid.

How do you balance your show booking with your day job and your bands?

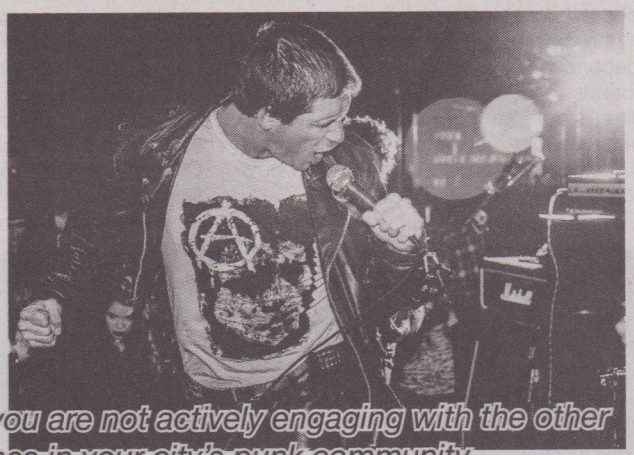
There is zero balance. It's organized chaos. I used to be pretty organized and on top of stuff when I started. As soon as a band asked for a show, I would have it booked, have a poster done and announce it within a week. Doing the festival screwed with it over time and then adding the venue only made it all worse. Running a venue totally lets bands slip to the wayside. It's been a lesson in balance, 100%. I would say at this point, just to keep up with emails, I try and make time every day to respond to people before I go to work. If I can find time at night, I respond then too, but it sucks to look at a computer that much. That's something I can certainly do without.

Why did you start booking the fest? Why do you keep doing it?

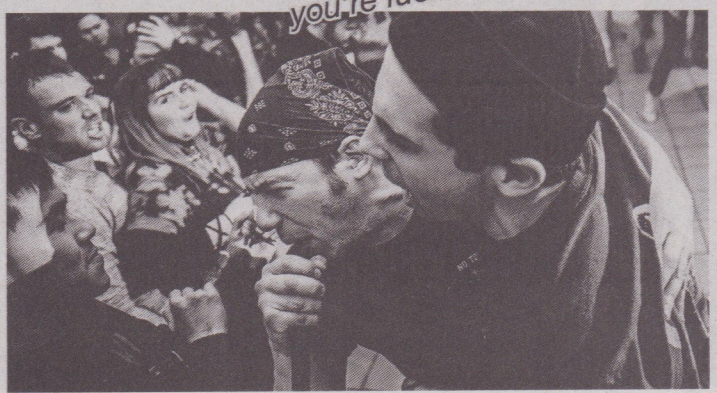
Well the festival spun out of something Fucked Up was doing. They did Halloween shows every year starting in '04. In '06 it became a festival. In '07 I filmed it and put out a DVD. By '09, they asked me to help book it. In 2010, they decided they didn't wanna do it anymore and I missed it happening. The fest just made Toronto feel bigger. It made punk here feel important. It served as this "you're not in this alone" moment. And that's why I keep doing it. It's really cool to have this touchstone that folks here look forward to going to, to hosting their friends



"Punk promoters' do everyone a disservice if they are not community organizers first and foremost."



"If you are not actively engaging with the other voices in your city's punk community, you're fucking it up."



from elsewhere, to playing, to coming to Toronto. That's the best. It's also really cool to see people from elsewhere seemingly pay attention to what's going on here.

A fest can't happen without a good local backbone—bands, venues, punks willing to put in the work. What are some things happening in Toronto right now that we should all be paying attention to? How much does the scene in Toronto inform the decisions you make about the fest?

I mean, more than anything, the fest is *for* Toronto. As it stands, there is only one spot that has been consistently used for Not Dead Yet and that's Soybomb. Jay from Soybomb has been a beacon of hope for this city for many years. It is the city's longest running "punk-run" venue and the only venue from year one that we still use. This year, Ryan from S.H.I.T. will be opening a record store / punk shop just in time for the fest. Also, D-Beatstro, a punk-run vegan cafe opened up this year and they'll be hosting some matinees for the festival. Thirsty & Miserable is the go-to watering hole during the festival, and that's run by Katie Whittaker, formerly of Brutal Knights. We used to do a food deal with this vegan taco place called Hot Beans that no longer exists, but I spoke to the old friend who ran it and his new restaurant, Porter House, which is a vegan pub, is gonna set up some deals for folks in town. We're gonna do that with Through Being Cool, a vegan bakery in town and A-Piecalypse Now, a vegan pizzeria, as well. We also always send folks to Rotate This for their record shopping needs. The fest provides a wicked opportunity for us to support these businesses and I really like that about it.

But the backbone isn't just businesses. We depend on so, so many folks here to host bands, host friends, help with door, lug backline, stage-manage and more. Without so many people just pitching in with good vibes and general support, none of this would get done.

The fest obviously has obviously changed over the years, due to a variety of factors. What's the through-line for you? What makes Not Dead Yet Not Dead Yet? What makes it different from other fests, if anything? What are your favorite fests around the world? What kinds of things have you "borrowed" from them?

If there's a through-line, hopefully it's the vibe. I'd say while it's changed in that there's been more shows and it's "diversified," it's only gotten bigger by adding more shows. We've used one room as the main room for the last four years and we've migrated this year to something that just has a slightly bigger capacity. It's actually a smaller room. I don't ever want the fest to feel like anything other than a series of awesome shows. That's what makes Not Dead Yet what it is I guess.

As far as other fests go, I have little idea what makes it different. Maybe that? New York's Alright was a similar sort of set up, but because NYC is so overwhelmingly large, it doesn't feel like punks have taken over the city. I think Not Dead Yet gets that vibe. Other than that, there's no festival that's set up the same way. Chaos was similar, but R.I.P.—and Austin just feels rockin' all the time.

Chaos In Tejas and Static Shock are my favorite fests that I've been too. Chaos was obviously notorious for making things happen you'd never think could. Static Shock was great last year because UK hardcore and punk is just ruling right now. New York's Alright was cool in that they could really get away with booking anything and folks would show cause most would travel just to catch all the locals in one weekend.

I'd really like to get to OHC and Damaged City and K-Town and Kappunk. OHC seems just like an incredible awesome hang with lots of great bands and no pretension. Damaged City seems wicked because I feel like it really takes a page out of that city's history and adds to it at the same time. And I know Jeff at OHC and Nick and Chris at Damaged City are busting their asses. K-Town and Kappunk seem just like a good time from my far away vantage point.

And I mean, Horrible Fest is incredible as is anything that happens at Now That's Class. I don't borrow anything from it because Now That's Class is a one of a kind experience.

Favorite sets of the past years? And by that same token—disasters from the past! Did anything blow up in your face? How did you pick up the pieces?

Favorite sets? Geeze. Year one's Hoax set was really great. Year three's Limp Wrist set. Marked Men on Sunday night last year. The final Kremlin set at year three was very sick. Sheer Mag last year. The Mind Eraser set with three different drummers because Brendan lost his passport. I don't know—I'm missing so much. The real highlights of the past were setting off fireworks after year three and having a big dinner with folks still in town on Monday of last year. That was killer.

Disasters? I'd say when a drunk punk got into it with Kevin and subsequently the rest of Big Zit and half the venue, last year at a way over capacity after party. A fight broke out, dude basically had to get tossed down the stairs then proceeded to wait out front with a knife and a dog while all the kids that were ready to fight had ghosted. That sucked. Subsequently, it's got us re-thinking our after parties this year. They need to be safer than that.

How does the fest pay for itself? How much is paid for up front? Does the overflow from one year go to the next year? Is there an overflow?

This is the first year I am using a "real" ticketing company. I used to run it all through my paypal and I would hand copy and paste every name. The advantage was I could pay for flights with real money. This year, everything is being floated on credit (yikes). While it sucks that I end up leaning on that stuff, it would be incredibly hard to do it otherwise. So, I wouldn't say any of it is paid for up front. Overflow generally goes to locals, helpers, things like keeping the lights on at the venue and subsequently, because there's so much other stuff going on, floating shows throughout the year. We just try and keep as tight an eye as possible on the money and do our best to track it all.

You don't give out press passes. You originally said you wouldn't work with booking agents. But as we talked about, now our friends are the writers trying to cover the fest and the booking agents trying to get bands on it. How do you navigate this? Can you keep a fest punk and DIY while still engaging with these things? How do you do it and keep the conversation on your own terms? If you can do it without them, why involve them?

I suppose the involvements of the "mechanisms of the industry" are all things we generally want to avoid as they serve to keep the powers that be in power. We all need to be aware that there is a lot of stuff merely masquerading as punk these days. I think the real answer here should not be a knee jerk "fuck that," but a thoughtful response. I try to approach each instance

now with a response that I think best suits it. I generally avoid anyone who I don't at least have a personal relationship with. I have zero tolerance for any music industry type jumping up and asking to get involved who I don't know or respect. That's the easiest way to approach the agent world.

Press is different though. We're living in a really weird time for the dissemination of punk information. Up until recently, this was all somewhat tribal. You had to know someone to learn something, or find a gatekeeper, like an older sibling or someone at a record store. That's changed now. Kids have so much punk history at their fingertips and we're already starting to see how it changes the young folks that are making up punk today. You have to consider that the fact that there is no single authority on punk is both its strength and its weakness. In a time where there is less and less tactile media documenting our scenes for people to find, and because some things are conceded to *Noisey* or whatever else corporate-run media, we've got to consider that that will be the entry point on punk for people. That scares me. So, that's what I'm thinking about. Can we use press opportunities to communicate that this stuff is going on without conceding what it is truly about? I don't know. Maybe? Either way it feels like conceding something.

So can you keep a fest punk and DIY while engaging this stuff? I don't really know. I know that I'm way more concerned with being accountable to the community I'm a participant in than I am engaging with these things.

We could left turn completely into the world of what qualifies something as DIY these days—which is just as hard a discussion to have.

Who else is involved with the fest? What roles do each of you play?

So many people! My partner Sardé helps with a ton of the logistical stuff like organizing help and coordinating with artists for flyers. Our friend Alex helps with coordinating all of the backline stuff, making sure the right gear is where it needs to be. Our friend Michelle used to be captain of the door and would organize who was working where. Andy Nolan from Column of Heaven has helped forever with stage managing. My bandmates help with stage managing, etc. This year some of the younger folks from VCR are helping to run matinees. In the past it was some of the folks from Wastoids. So, so many people help. I'm sure I am missing a lot of them.

It's not just music. There was an art show last year. You work with lots of different artists from all over the world to make flyers for the shows. What other non-music related things are happening during the fest?

There is certainly an art show this year. That is being organized by a couple of members of S.H.I.T. and our friend Julie. There are going to be over twenty artists involved from all walks of punk. I think a lot of people have always been interested in punk's artistic inclinations. There are also a lot of exceptional artists from all over these days. If anything, it's easier now for us all to communicate and organize something like this.

As far as other things are concerned, this is the first year that we are messing with the idea of doing a "panel." Part of me thinks it's a bit goofy but I also think it's a worthwhile discussion. Tony Rettman, author of *NYHC* and *Why Be Something That You're Not*, and I had been talking about doing something and it manifested as this. We're going to have various punk rock documenters discuss how we are documenting our history in 2015, thinking about how technology is both helping us and hurting us in that regard.

No reunion bands, I know, I know! But if you had to choose...What's your dream gig lineup and venue—musicians dead or alive!

Well, I'll be completely honest. When I got into going to shows, I was really fond of "local" bands because what band could possibly provide more insight to my perspective than bands that exist in the now near me? A warped version of that drives the festival. What could possibly more important to punks than punk bands making music in the now? So here are active bands that I would still like to play Not Dead Yet: Tragedy, Total Control, Cock Sparrer, Poikkeus and Pura Manía at the Horseshoe Tavern in Toronto.

Someone's in town for a day before or after the fest. What should they do with their time? What's the perfect Toronto day?

Get up, grab a coffee at Capital in Parkdale. Go shopping at Rotate This and dig the bins—ask Brian, the singer of Youth Youth Youth, if he's got any good records behind the counter. Head up to Kensington Market and get food from pretty much anywhere—there are too many great spots to list. Have a beer with a friend at Thirsty & Miserable. Maybe get some dumplings in Chinatown. That's really all life is for me when I'm not at a gig: coffee, records, food and hanging out.

Not Dead Yet is happening October 22-25 in Toronto, Ontario. See notdeadyettoronto.tumblr.com for more information.

FIVE YEARS IN: STILL NOT DEAD

Year 1: ~40 bands, 7 venues, 10 shows
Year 2: ~55 bands, 6 venues, 10 shows
Year 3: ~65 bands, 5 venues, 11 shows
Year 4: ~90 bands, 11 venues, 16 shows
Year 5: ~100 bands, 8 venues, 17 shows

SBSM SBSM SBSM SBSM

In a landscape littered with skeletons of a plethora of punk genres, SBSM stand on their own, living in the void between noise and synthpunk. Their grinding and industrial electronic cacophony soundtracks an examination of inner feelings and thought processes triggered by the band's experiences of the material world through their marginalized identities.

Their music narrates a total deconstruction and rejection of existence, concepts, and systems as we know them, and the struggle to survive, finding glimmers of what has been lost and what we can create in the cracks. You can hear those cracks between undulating toms and triggered glitches. Between ugly, raw and shameful feelings you can find hope.

Introduction by Ari Perezdiez.
Interview by Jaime Clark.
Photos by Adrian Discipulo.

MRR: Who is in this band and what do they play?

Sep: My name is Sep, I identify as a dumb bitch trans-femme Caspian Sea mermaid and I play with loops, drum machine, synthesizers, toy keyboards, and feedback.

Rola: I play the same machines Sep does and do vocals.

Rosie: My name is Rosie, and I drum in the band. I might have resting bitch face but I'm nice. Promise.

MRR: Why does SBSM exist?

Sep: For people to see a beautiful tranny bitch making her anger loud and accessible to other heartbroken queers who wanna watch the world burn—though originally I wanted to be in a band so I could get a boyfriend. That happened like three months in, so what sustained me in this project was seeing how collaborating with Rosie and Rola was really good for my mental health, and also because it helped me in my desire to give purpose to my angst in ways that could be useful for other people. This world is full of horrible shit that endangers queer and non-white people's autonomy and self-worth. SBSM is us weaponizing our emotions to defend against that.

Rola: Sep and Rosie were doing a thing I really wanted to do, and they invited me to join. We figured out how to make some sounds to give context to our despair and desires. It's a life-affirming thing that helps me deal with a lot of kinds of pain. I also struggle with this question of "why does something important to me exist." It is a hard question to answer. I don't spend much time pondering why we do SBSM—mostly I am glad we do. Like I met Rosie and Sep and we recognized the sad hectic gay freaks within each other and probably SBSM is one of the accumulations of these things.

Rosie: It took me forever to answer this interview question because I am an existential freak. Tackling depression and anxiety, while being asked why something I do exists is kind of intense. I get deep into that hole, anyway. I feel as if a lot of marginalized people probably think about this all of the time, and it kind of jabs at those questions of self-worth and purpose. It's hard. And apparently I have a lot of feelings about my band; it means a lot to me. It's definitely a healthy outlet for me. A ritual to work out hardship or escape the oppressive customs of daily life. It's nice to have a space to exist [the Gay Hell, SBSM's practice space] and be able to make noise and say whatever we want to say. You don't get that everywhere else. Yelling about the fall of civilization or your loved ones' teeth. Fuck the police. Up the Hoes.

SBSM for sure exists because we have a lot of feelings towards the state of things. Or in result of. The type of music is especially healing for me. The noise is like a static fog that you can project whatever you want onto; I feel like the noise protects me in a way. And I love playing the drums! I appreciate Sep and Rola so much for being badasses, for doing the work it takes to exist with me. Shit in punk, DIY and whatever doesn't always make space for people like us. So we got make it ourselves. There's a lot of

vulnerability involved, and being vulnerable to a magazine like *MRR*, that was full of of dudes with guitars for so long, not queerdo brown people who make noise with machines, left me feeling conflicted about doing this interview at first. I felt like, what do they want from us? But this is important because we have existed even if people hadn't noticed. That's the thing about being queer and brown. We've been here. Sometimes, or a lot of the time, being like us means you don't get the space that others do because worth is subjective and those standards are traditionally set by white dudes. I'm happy *MRR* is opening up because QTPOC need to be heard. So maybe we exist not just for our own mental health, but for the mental health of people who struggle similarly to us. Because when you feel less alone in your struggle, you may realize that it isn't *you*.

MRR: What are three very important things about SBSM?

Sep: An immediate thing that comes to mind is how doing these things to try to represent yourself is such a struggle. When you put your thoughts and emotions out into the world, you lose control of your meanings. Through this band I've learned that self-preservation is actually pretty important. It's hard to try to insert myself into larger, more popular dialogues (punk included). I always have this insecurity that "no one wants to hear this tranny speak," because I know that my honesty can cause unwanted social ruptures. Their refusal of you makes you out to be a farce, an inconvenience, a sensitive bitch obsessed with her identity. Their denial of your reality makes way for self-destruction—SBSM is a way to stabilize each other's existence. We remind each other to be incredibly aware of how power dynamics are formed. The way that people who hold power maintain control happens via the fragility of their egos. We need to stop doing the unnecessary labor that those fragilities ask of us. How do we validate ourselves amidst the crime of refusing to accommodate those who resemble and replicate the afflictions of our oppressors?

Rosie: The three of us. If anyone really understood the amount of emotional labor it takes for us to be a band...it's so intense but it's so important for the three of us to be together right now. The capacity for honesty, love, patience, and goofiness is large. And it seems that with time it's just getting better—our communication, and the music. I think about the dynamic of the people in my band, and what we want for SBSM, and it's essential for the three of us to keep each other happy. Not just in our band, but in our lives. The three of us doing the work to be better always: challenging each other, challenging people around us, and staying sincere about our politics. Being ourselves somewhat unapologetically and still with vulnerability.

Rola: It's been important to me from the get go that we are clear about our anti-patriarchal, anti-white supremacist, anti-fascist beliefs; that we defend ourselves against possible co-optations of our actions and bodies. It's super important to me how much we make each other laugh while we stay serious about real shit. Also important—maybe the most important—are our relationships to each other and to a larger network of friends and sweeties and bands/artists who care about things similar to what we care about. SBSM has been a huge way I've learned how to treat each other better, how to deal with conflict better, how to know when to stick it out and when to move on.

MRR: What are your favorite ways that SBSM has been described (sonically or otherwise)?

Sep: "Interesting," "cool," and "weird" are annoying just because it's too easy. I actually prefer when people are honest about not liking us rather than using those words as passes in awkward social interactions. I think Greg Harvester's reviews of us are always my favorite, because he, before even knowing us personally, was so perceptive of our dynamic as people who are friends more than how we are just an aesthetic in music. We are sometimes referred to as "hardcore" and that just doesn't make sense to me—the word feels disingenuous or something. We are noisy and intense but that doesn't come from an illusion of confidence, it comes from uncertainty, frustration, fear, and a need to give dimensions to those anxieties.

Rola: Katrina from Providence, such a great person I was so happy to meet on our tour, described us on their blog as the sound after the sound of the world shattering, I really like this. We talk collectively about collapse a lot.

Rosie: I like the way people know our electronics are always on the verge of breaking. And it's true. Our set-up is a little different than other bands we play with, and probably even more so than those in *MRR*. So the breaking machines come up quite a bit. It's also nice when our music is described as ugly, or in reference to destruction. Very important sounds for the dismantling of colonial trauma. I like no beauty / new beauty as a genre concept. I mostly just get frustrated when people try to be like "oh yeah, riot grrrl," because it's not.

MRR: What in the Bay Area is influencing you right now? Are there any bands, performers, writers, visual artists, events, people, etc. that inspire or effect your individual and collective minds?

Sep: I don't know if Tieraney (Wizard Apprentice) relates herself to punk at all, but I hope that she may feel good when I say that I think she's the punkest artist/musician in Oakland. The way she's able to be honest about her vulnerabilities is a skill that defies so much of what patriarchy/capitalism/whiteness prescribes us. We're told that our feelings of rage or despondency with this world are not real and should not be recognized, because they fracture oppressive structures that people are so obsessed with upholding. By being empathetic and compassionately antagonistic Tieraney's art threatens dominant forms of terror imposed on queer and/or Black/brown bodies. I think it takes a lot of courage for someone to write (in her words) "responsible love songs."

My sister, The Bedroom Witch, is creating music and art that exists in the reflective, beautiful void of trans girl misery/resilience that is so necessary for me to embrace. Think and Die Thinking Fest in San Jose is also a wonderful yearly thing that I've been able to be a part of for the past three years, and there is too much I could say about it. The *LIES* journal is great. Other Weapons distro is sick. Lots of inspiring events happen at Qilombo. The Bay Area queer nihilists have a lot of good shit they say and write. Ari Perezdiez is a spot-on, no bullshit bitch who reminds me to stay smart and strong. Everyone who comes to Scream Queens. No Babies, Daisy World, Silent Girlfriend, Ragana, Stillsuit, Salt Flat, Sorry Not Sorry, Beast Nest, Felidae, Las Sucias—there are so many amazing bands that influence us. My housemate Zoe is brilliant and talking with her about gender de(con)struction shit is a part of my lifeforce these days. People rising up in the streets and fighting the cops and destroying shit; any time people show hostility and resistance against the state I'm inspired. I also love Ricky, my boyfriend so much, no one in the world has ever made me feel as loved as much as this soft, fluffy cloud does.

Rola: Poet friends Oki Sogumi (formerly Oakland based and currently Philly), Wendy Trevino (SF), Tati Luboviski-Avosta (SF). Their words help me deal with and relate more honestly to the world we live in. The zines *Toothworm* and *Fawn Palace*, both out of Oakland. My friend Carla who makes beautiful videos and books. When Malportado Kids played in Oakland they had this video projection that asked "WHO TAUGHT YOU TO HATE YOURSELF?" I think about this often. Scream Queens Radio, always; especially Sep's new segment where she reads letters on air from transwomen prisoners she's writing to. I don't know them personally but I follow Keep Hoods Yours on social media and they really inspire me, particularly the way they recently publicly dealt with a serial assaulter. People who are fighting for San Francisco and Oakland, people here taking action against their oppressors.

Rosie: I have a lot of overlap with Sep and Rola. In addition to those, I want to mention Bay Area Girls Rock Camp, and how much those girls blew my mind. Seeing youth explore themselves through music in that kind of accepting and supportive environment is very influential. The volunteers too! There seems to be a lack of youth inclusivity in the music/punk/queer scene, so it's cool to see friends

and others interact with the local youth in such enriching ways. The youth are the future of music and punk.

MRR: What are you working on outside of this band?
Sep: I just finished a zine about what I call the "trans selfie movement." The most important line in it is "Dysphoria is a puncture wound with the potential of becoming a larger aperture for the symptomatic 'us' to enter and destroy gender as a whole." It's mostly pictures of me alongside stories about me fucking weird men who don't know what to do with the "labyrinth of discontinuities" I call my body. I'm archiving my terror and trying to control my hysteria existing in a world that wants to tear me apart, its foot soldiers being the men I end up in torrid sexual or romantic situations with.

I also do Scream Queens Radio with Rosie. It's been three years that we've been occupying that studio every Wednesday where we cry, talk shit, connect with tough/emotional people, blast ourselves with weird music. Through the radio I'm trying to start writing to trans women prisoners regularly so I can read their letters on air, for our audience to engage more with queer incarcerated people. I'm also working hard on my friendships and romances: trying to bring visibility and recognition to unseen emotional labor, learning to understand the insidious nuances of transmisogyny. I need to put my trust in better people/things than I normally have throughout my life.
Rola: Working hard on being being a solid friend and a solid boo and being good to myself. We accidentally started a Scream Queens Distro during our tour last year, and I am working on making that more real, and making past episodes of Scream Queens Radio available online somewhere to listen to. With both those things I'm trying to participate in archiving the stories of women, queer/trans people, sex workers, brown and Black people who fight back. I want to put on more benefit events, specifically for prisoners.
Rosie: My job is a big project, but I won't go into that here. Sep and I have our radio show Scream Queens, which also feels like a big project sometimes. It's been nice having other people more involved in the radio show these days, and I am happy that Sep has been putting a lot into it. I have also been working on some mental and physical health projects. Having chronic depression and body pain is fucking tough, so learning DIY health is on my mind a lot. I study up on foods and herbs, plus physical training to keep myself and friends intact. I also have been messing around with other musical instruments, which is fun. I spent a month and a half learning how to build a house this summer. The project is called Building Permanence, it's in middle Tennessee, and it focuses on building an autonomous space for QTPOC on a predominantly white queer land project. Housing in general has been a fucking project, actually, because the rent is ridiculous in Oakland right now.

MRR: What lies in store for SBSM? Any future plans?
Sep: I'm a visual bitch and would love to have a music video one day. I want our distro of zines to actually happen. We might do a Europe tour with Ragana next summer. I want the three of us to keep taking care of each other and ourselves and our friends.
Rola: Probably what we've been doing: making songs and drawings and zines. Sharpening our skills and our analysis.
Rosie: I look forward to collaborating with Tieraney. She's working on a TV series, and will be interviewing our band along with other POC artists. Perhaps we'll press our songs into vinyl sometime in the near future, too! Besides that, I want to take it slow with band stuff, and focus on other non-band things.

MRR: Is SBSM the best band in Oakland right now? (My answer is yes.)
Sep: To be real, I can't think of things in these terms. I've accepted that I'll never actually be able to understand why people like our band, but it's very validating to even be asked this question. On tour we talked about having "imposter syndrome" a lot. If I started to have any sort of confidence in myself, the mutilation of it would be harsh and immediate, so for now I'm gonna keep operating from my insecurities.
Rosie: Of course not. Haha! If I think about being the best, I will lose sight of what this band really means for me.
Rola: LOL, no. And what Rosie said.

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"I live in a city where motherfuckers work hard, drink beer and want their music raw and real" says Cleveland punk vet Lamont "Bim" Thomas. He's a prolific artist who has been making music for over twenty years and shows no signs of pumping the brakes. Lamont has played in Puffy Areolas, the Bassholes, This Moment In Black History and most recently Obnox. Their latest LP, Know America, *is a concept record detailing the hijacking of a radio station. It's a powerful statement on the grim state of music and race in this country. Thomas's vast and curious taste in music aids him in seamlessly blending hip-hop, noise, soul, punk, and garage rock into his sound. He likes to call his specific brand of punk "reefer on wax." We recently met up at a punk bar in Cleveland to smoke and chat. We spoke about skateboarding being a catalyst for getting into punk, touring with John Morton of the Electric Eels and the scene in Cleveland, among other things.*
Interview and introduction by Nat Cherry.

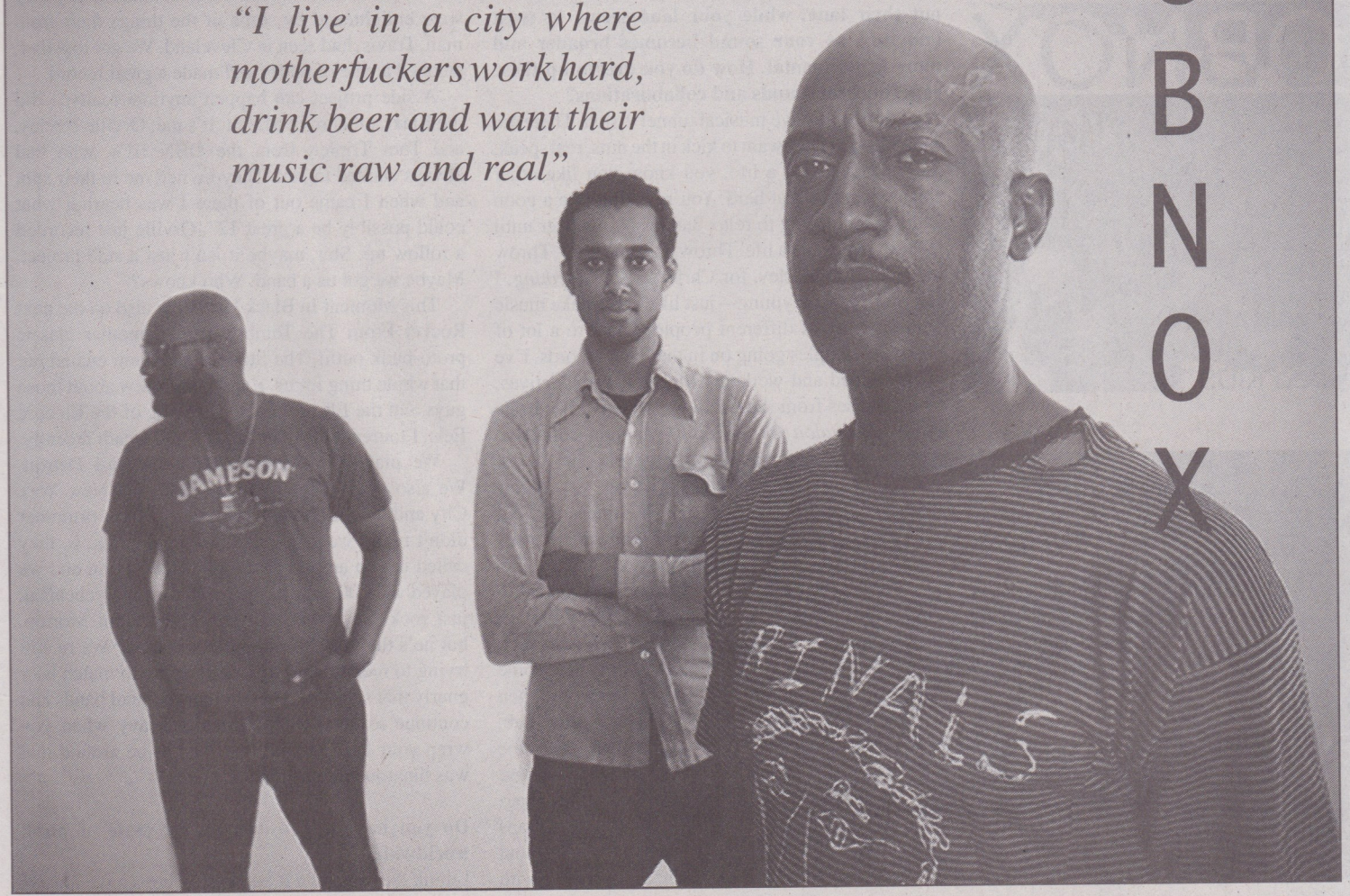
Can you pinpoint anything during your upbringing that caused you to gravitate towards punk?
Listening to records and skateboarding started it all for me. I was working at a record store in Columbus called Used Kids and had access to records. As a kid, you're just building ramps with your friends and hanging out. The perfect soundtrack to your life is a good punk record. Hearing Black Flag and Bad Brains was the jump off. All of this music was reinforcing what was already happening in my life.

Did you develop an affinity for skate punk at that time?
Well, yeah. I loved the Dirty Rotten Imbeciles especially. I couldn't stop listening to shit like *Dealing With It!*. You watch a good skate documentary or a good skate video and it's filled with punk music. That was another time, when I was a teenager. You don't get into the deep, deep digs yet. You get into what a kid would get into.

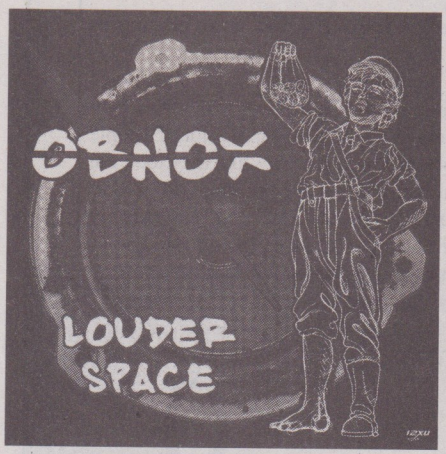
Do you remember the first punk show you ever attended?
I mean I'd seen Metallica before I ever saw an actual punk show or let alone any underground punk thing. As silly as it sounds, in the '80s I saw the Violent Femmes and a few other punk openers. That was eye-opening for me. That was when I was a teenager. Then when I went to college I saw the local scene at Bowling Green State University, which was rooted in punk rock.

When did you first get involved in the scene and start playing in bands?
I lived in Columbus for half a dozen years and was involved in a couple bands there. I ended up joining the Bassholes, which had Don Howland from the Gibson Brothers in the lineup. Man, a lot of people are influenced by the Gibson Brothers' catalogue! It's like they took the Cramps and threw it back even further and got even crazier with it. I've been fucking with Don forever. Just played with him recently. Don is my brother—my mentor. He's one of the smartest dudes I know. He knows a shit ton about punk. He started out as a journalist writing for *New York Rocker* and early *Spin*. He's seen a lot, so to be in his kind of company meant a lot to me. I knew I wasn't dealing with some knucklehead.

"I live in a city where motherfuckers work hard, drink beer and want their music raw and real"



OBNOX



Then came This Moment In Black History. They're my brothers. I had been living in Cleveland for a couple years. I hadn't been doing anything musical, just working for a moving company. I went to a party and met those dudes and we started writing songs. After the first couple of jams we were like, "Well fuck it, let's make a 7" and start kicking people's asses, you know?" There was a mutual respect thing because of the bands that they were coming out of and the band that I was coming out of. They had a house, the fucking Black Eye House. That was the DIY mecca for a minute. All the traveling bands needed a place to stay, so all the punk motherfuckers from the bars and clubs landed at the Black Eye. All these bands on top of all of our bands and projects. So, everybody's playing, everybody's rehearsing. Niggas are getting high and fucked up. It was a community. A family. A utopia.

I also played with Puffy Areolas for two years. We put out the *1982: Dishonorable Discharge* LP as well as a few singles. During that same time, I was touring with Unholy Two.

Obnox came to life when This Moment In Black History was on a break and I had some time to kill. I was learning to play guitar at the time and had a surplus of ideas running through my head. I wanted to try out a more experimental, noisier side to punk. Bring a hip-hop edge to the sound. I set out to make a 7" and that quickly turned into an EP. The record was well received and people fucked with it. We've had a million drummers, all of them amazing.

A lot of artists stick to what they know and carve out their lane, while your lane seems to twist and turn as your sound becomes broader and more experimental. How do you dream up these experimental sounds and collaborations?

A lot of people have musical tunnel vision. There are a lot of goons I just want to kick in the nuts, real speak. Motherfucker, get a life, you know you like other shit. You aren't that hard. You're acting like a goon and I'm just trying to relax and drink this beer until the next band. Get a life. Throw on some ESG. Throw on some Bob Marley, for Christ's sake. *Anything*. I can rock out to anything—just like I can make music with an array of different people. There're a lot of beats and samples going on in the 'Nox records. I've always vibed and worked with hip-hop collectives. Ghost Noises from the Alloy-X collective has beats on my *Boogalou Reed* record. Muamin collective put in work on *Know America*. All those cats are like me. They listen to everything. They can rock out to some hardcore, then to some dub, then to some EDM. Those are the types of musicians I surround myself with because tunnel vision isn't going to do anybody any good. That's my tribe—musicians who listen to it all.

Where did the idea for your concept record, *Know America*, come from?

I was probably smoking some good bud. *[laughs]* Actually, I was working on a handful of songs at the time that were all very different from one another. When I listened to them back to back, they sounded like a mixtape. They sounded like an old school AM radio broadcast. That was the starting point. Then I brought back those old hip-hop skits into the mix. Those got to be so outlandish that they stopped doing them for a while. I wanted to see how they'd sound on our indie rock record. The whole thing started to sound reminiscent of what radio used to be. You'd hear Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwick, Creedence Clearwater Revival, James Brown, and the Everly Brothers all in a half an hour block. This record is a reminder of what radio used to mean and how the public used to get their music.

Any projects you've been working on that we should look out for?

I've been working on a bunch of shit. Next year I'm going to put out one record called *Niggative Approach*. That'll be the one Obnox project I release while I let all the side projects bubble. I'm also on the next ONO record. ONO is a proto-industrial band with roots in Cleveland, but out of Chicago. Before you get to a lot of good industrial music, you've got to reckon with ONO. It's safe to say they were enlightened by some of the things their front man, Travis, had seen in Cleveland. We got together, smoked a bale of reefer and made a great record.

A side project can happen anytime really. I did the Blaxxx record in March. It's me, Orville Neeley, and Tom Triplett from the OBN III's, who had always wanted to jam. They invited me to their spot and when I came out of there I was hearing what could possibly be a great 12". Orville just recorded a follow up. Shit, maybe it isn't just a side project. Maybe we got us a band. Who knows?

This Moment In Black History is also on the next Rocket From The Tombs record—another classic proto-punk outfit. The Stooges and them etched out that whole thing for us. Everybody knew about those guys and the Electric Eels. Speaking of the Electric Eels, I toured with John Morton and Death recently.

We played in Akron, Columbus, and Detroit. We also opened for Death in D.C. and New York City and held it down. It was weird. Their drummer didn't really want to make the trip I guess, so they called me up around 12:30 in the afternoon and we played at 8:00 that night in Akron. No rehearsal, just rock. Say what you will about John Morton, but he's the god. Shit, the Electric Eels? We're still trying to reckon with that. Still trying to match how gnarly that shit was. They influenced mad bands and continue to do so. Ohio's really heavy when you wrap your head around that. Just to be around that was like touching history.

Do you have any words on the state of punk worldwide?

I think the fans own it but the big boys have always

made a lot of money off of it. Right now the independent dudes are thriving so the big boys and their affiliates are trying to figure out how they can get their stacks back. These young bands that can make all their own shit and tour are the ones out here really doing it. All you need is a Bandcamp, a t-shirt guy and a good mechanic. When CDs were popular and shit, independent record labels kept those pressing plants busy popping out their vinyl. Now that the major record labels are looking for something to sell, all the plants are clogged up. Then we see the influx of tapes. Everybody's got a fucking tape out now because, shit, people want to get their music out quick.

Another thing is paying these musicians. If the motherfuckers are making good rock'n'roll music, give them their money. Generations of bands have settled for kibble and bits or kibbles and tits. They'd get thrown 75 dollars, beer and pizza and be content. Motherfucker, what are you going to eat tomorrow? What are you going to put in your tank? What if your fucking transmission blows tomorrow? Country dudes don't take that shit. Rappers don't take that shit. But, a punk band that's lugging gear around, making seven hour drives, really trying to make shit happen can't make over a hundred dollars? Fuck you and motherfuck the dude that taught you to do that! It's got to change. You want good music? You want people to be interested in good punk rock? You have to pay these motherfuckers who are actually making it.

Do you believe the Internet has hurt or helped the music industry?
The Internet can definitely help as an artist. Back in the day you had to get in line with the traditional model of success, which was record sales. Now you can get yourself a little Internet notoriety, which could bring people out to shows and get them into it. Create a following. The sharing part can shed light on certain motherfuckers who normally wouldn't be heard. At the same time, that sharing of music allows people to bypass paying into that music—not supporting live bands, buying the records, not being a part of the culture. Just sitting behind a bootlegged mp3 file on their computer screen. The Internet is a gift and a curse to the industry.

You just got back from touring Europe with Obnox.
Shit, it was great! Belgium, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, the UK. I'd been to most of the cities before, touring with the Bassholes in the '90s. This Moment also toured over there as well. I saw old friends and made new friends. We played at the Paradiso and La Petit Bain. We played with Frustration on their four-year anniversary. We played the OpenAir festival in Switzerland on a mountain. Kids were camping out. They had a disco tent and chicks dancing everywhere. Got to link up in Birmingham with my pals from the Cold Rice Club. Some nigga in the Netherlands kept hearing me say "CLE punk" and thought I was saying "clean punk." I was like, "No, motherfucker! This is CLE punk! You've got to understand!"

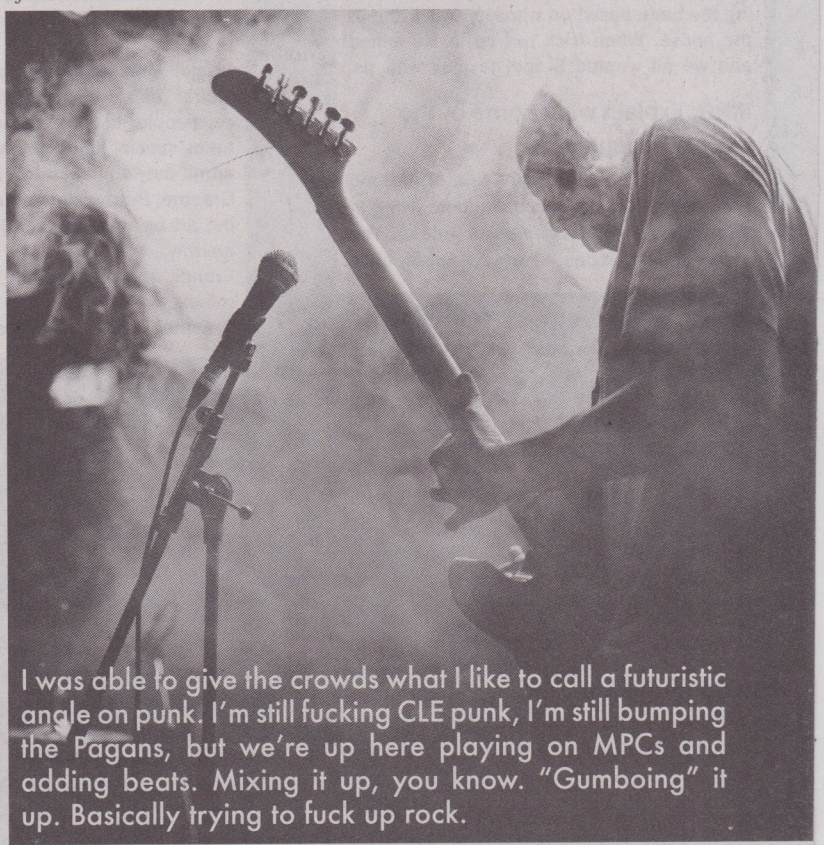
I was able to give the crowds what I like to call a futuristic angle on punk. I'm still fucking CLE punk, I'm still bumping the Pagans, but we're up here playing on MPCs and adding beats. Mixing it up, you know. "Gumboing" it up. Basically trying to fuck up rock. The European cats and the British cats were like, "Hell yeah, take it there!" whereas some people in the States are more reluctant. The shows were packed. Great reefer, great venues, great production levels. I've got to give it up to the venues and soundmen over there. It was just good to touch down again.

What are some of you favorite bands in Cleveland at the moment?
Well, shit, all of them. I love everything that Saucepan [Records] is cooking up. Lucha Eterna, Yambag, Bad Noids, and the new Prison Moan. Of course I love Wetbrain, Fat Vegan, and Inmates. Cruelster's new 7" *Terminal Windmill* is everything that I need right now. I always need young motherfuckers like that coming up. Now we need some new motherfuckers to come up. You know that I'll hold you down in an elderly way. Paul Schlacter of Inmates and all of these motherfuckers will hold you down. I want to catch that little bit of talent and amplify it to shed light on the city. That's that Cleveland thing, you know, that support.

When did you first meet Richard Rodriguez of Saucepan Records and Lucha Eterna?
I first met him at a Bad Noids show and I was like, "How have I not picked up on this dude?" I met him later in the life of his band Lucha Eterna, who were always teetering on breaking up. It was perfect though, because that meant I could borrow him to play drums with Obnox. He was a natural with that shit. The original drummer, Elijah Vasquez, had moved to Columbus and Richard helped me keep the band alive. This motherfucker had only been playing the drums for a couple years, but he stepped up to the plate. Next thing you know we're in Memphis, we're in Nashville, we're in Austin, we're out in New York. In Cleveland, he's become a leader in the channels of the modern scene and I'm just in his orbit. He's the homie for life. I fucking love that boy.

What has your experience been like as a punk of color?
I've been doing this shit since I was thirteen or fourteen years old. From skateboarding to learning how to play the drums; it's just all growth to me. I take it like any other Black motherfucker doing any other shit. We've got be twice as good on account of motherfuckers always underestimating you and that's just real. You see it in the streets. Motherfuckers are getting gunned down. You see what the fuck we've been talking about all these years. To avoid perishing in the midst of that type of struggle, I concentrate on the music, the art and the idea that music soothes the savage beast. I just ran into Ian Mackaye when we opened for Death and we got to talk about Pure Hell's 1980 debut record *Noise Addiction*. I was like, "Hell yeah! This is exactly what I want to talk to you about." It made me think. It made me want my shit to matter in the same way that those guys matter. I'm essentially trying to write something that my brothers would love, but at the same time, everybody's welcome to it. We've got a gang of brothers into it, but there's a mountain of white cats and eses, too. That's progress to me. I hope we add up in the conversation of Black rock. I hope it means something. I just focus on my craft and my community and eventually the community will catch up.

Know America *is out now on Ever/Never Records. You can find Lamont's music on Soundcloud. If you want some wax, however, find his records at Cleveland shops like My Mind's Eye, Loop, Bent Crayon, Hausfrau, Music Saves or Used Kids in Columbus. Also, through Revolver, Ever/Never Records, Florida's Dying, Dischord Records, Carrot Top or directly from 12XU Records.*



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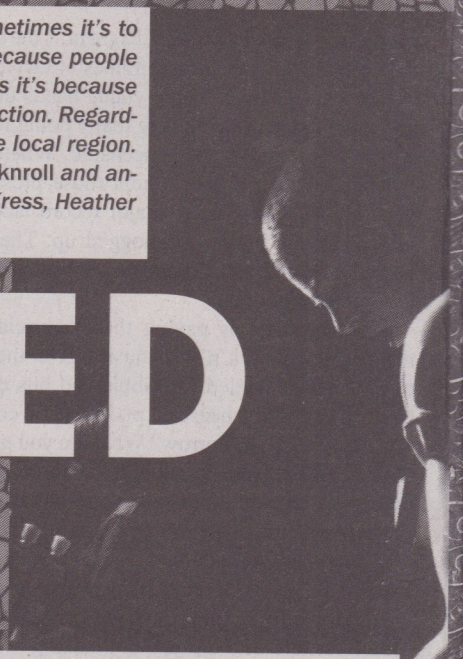
Why do bands form? Sometimes it's to be a voice for those who cannot speak or won't be heard. Sometimes it's to express your personal opinions on a variety of topics that either please or anger you. Sometimes it's because people are bored with their lives and want to inject a bit of purpose or excitement to their existence. Most times it's because a group of friends or like-minded individuals want to spend more time together and feel a creative connection. Regardless of the reason, Edmonton, Canada's Strangled have put together a successful stretch of shows in the local region. Ready to venture outside Alberta this fall for the first time, they decided to sit down with Maximum Rocknroll *and answer a few questions. Interview and introduction by Dave Quirk. Photos provided by Lauren Alston, Alex Kress, Heather Noel, and Roxana Xenia.*

STRANGLED



Brandi: bass Graeme: drums Nick: lead guitar Moira: guitar/vocals

TOUR DATES
(with Veil from St. Louis)
10/26: Cleveland
10/27: Bloomington
10/28: Chicago
10/29: Minneapolis
10/30: Kansas City
10/31: St. Louis

MRR: Okay, give me a brief history of how you started.

Graeme: I guess it was in 2012...2013, sorry. I remember Moira was living with me at the time and she was trying to get some songs together and there was a drum set that I would hammer on while she did that. She had these barebones songs and we started building the band based on whoever was living at the house. When Nick moved in, he joined and we all wanted Brandi to play with us.

MRR: Explain what some of the lyrical concepts are.

Moira: Definitely the darker side of life and exploring some evil concepts about living in this society and the people who rule us. The reality of life and death...and I definitely have a mistrust for authority and whose guiding hand is controlling the puppets on earth.

Graeme: I do find it cool that as a lyricist, Moira brings a science-fiction approach.

Brandi: She creates good imagery. She tells a story out of it.

Graeme: I totally agree. If you look at "Cost of Living," it's a pretty interesting look at commercialism and the whole idea of consuming, and told in a strange way. I get the feeling you're in a weird supermarket in the humanoid future, filled with body parts buying a new arm. Maybe a power glove instead of a regular hand! Moira definitely has a twisted vision.

MRR: Do you think everyone can feel estranged from the rest of society or is it just a particular group of individuals sifting through the mud?

Moira: I think most of the world is pretty content with their life even when they're living in the most...

Brandi: Mundane existence.

Moira: Yeah, depending on their circumstances, people just accept and do their life. It takes special kinds of people to question or admit they don't fit into a routine lifestyle.

Graeme: But I also think anyone already doing art or anything creative feels estranged anyway.

Brandi: And approaching it with a different mindset.

Graeme: I find it more interesting that within this band, we're feeling estranged from the culture we're from, like punk and hardcore or post-punk. A lot of times, people in this band don't even feel this is their community and don't see eye to eye with some of the hierarchies within the scene.

Moira: Even a counterculture is a current of people moving together. So to go against that leaves you feeling even more alienated from a group that accepts you but you don't necessarily agree with everything with them.

MRR: Perfect segue for a band from Western Canada! What are some of the challenges a band from here face that they wouldn't if they were from another part of the country?

Moira: Exposure.

Graeme: Well, no one cares you're from a city like Edmonton. Why would someone in New York care? It's not like they can get our records because we don't tour very often and shipping costs are so high.

Brandi: It's a little more of an isolated destination so there's not as much going and coming out of it, unfortunately. Even for us to do a tour, we have to drive twelve hours to get to a hotspot destination and then we end up going into the States anyways because the cities are closer together.

Graeme: But we can't, haha!

Brandi: Well, we don't think we can.
Graeme: Because we got a fuckin' jailbird!
Nick: Oh shit...

MRR: Nick, we can't have you saying "Oh shit..." as your only participation in this interview. It doesn't involve just you but includes you—what is it like juggling time in Strangled with your other bands, Rhythm of Cruelty, No Problem and the Strap?

Nick: Everything's pretty loose. We all find time to get it together.

MRR: Does it help that there's not much going on in Edmonton? Are there more nights reserved to practice?

Graeme: I can only speak for myself being in this band and No Problem. It feels like both those bands work when inspiration is fluttering. That's when we do work. But when it's just going over the set...
Nick: It gets a little dry.
Moira: We need our own outlets to do our own thing. You mentioned these guys' projects but I also have another band called Beauty Rest that gets done when inspiration strikes. The cool thing about Strangled is it allows me to explore the dark side and heavier music. I think that's what I like about it most is creating this evil force that a person needs only once in awhile. It's great to have people that are tuned into that and you can riff off of.
Brandi: Just share their energy.
Moira: Other projects of ours allow for different forms of expressions. Like in No Problem, Graeme's going crazy being a wild man. Brandi's rocking it too with Rhythm of Cruelty. Nick gets chained up when the Strap plays.
Brandi: He gets smacked across the face with a leather strap!

MRR: Doesn't that happen when he crosses international borders too?

Brandi: We're not sure yet! That's why we haven't tried it yet.
Graeme: But for me, I think this band is a particular outlet because growing up with Moira (who is my sister), I was "super" punk and at the time, and didn't wanna hang out with her because she's eight years younger than me and into hockey and stuff.
Moira: I was only in hockey 'til I was twelve!

MRR: She shoots, she scores!

Graeme: We definitely were in different spots listening to different music so during her developing years, I didn't feel I was there to hang and listen to records together.
Moira: Although, you did get me into Minor Threat and Toy Dolls at the age of eight.

MRR: At the same time?! "You're gonna listen to this and then this!"

Graeme: Well, I failed with Sandy [the middle brother] so I pushed Zero Boys pretty hard, haha!
Moira: Yep, definitely rocked out hard to them.
Graeme: But really, this band has been really about doing something with her while she's been going through some hard shit the last couple years and doing my part as a brother. And for everyone, like I suck at drums, but everyone decided to form the band with the abilities we have and do our own sound. Brandi is the most proficient at her instrument but everyone else is still feeling their way around.
Moira: My brother has a direct way to his responses, as you can tell, and that creates a very conducive environment. "Try it this way. Nope, that sucks." Being critical of each other in order to achieve that "good song." You have to be like that during the songwriting phase or you end up with something that's been done before.
Graeme: When we started, we almost sounded garage-y and even had a few hardcore songs but we couldn't play fast very well. After we started putting our heads together we started collaborating on all the tracks besides maybe one or two. Brandi will have a bass line or Nick will come up with a riff but sometimes we switch them around to arrange them better.

MRR: You were invited to play this year's Not Dead Yet festival in Toronto this year. Is there a sense of accomplishment attached to knowing your peers have accepted what you're trying to do in the band?

Moira: Well...not there yet!

MRR: No, that's not the name of the fest!

Graeme: I think it's great that Greg [Benedetto] and everyone involved are making that fest one of the cooler ones going on right now. Props to him for giving Toronto such a huge push and making it an annual mainstay or hot spot.
Moira: It's also great they're having so many Alberta bands this year. Finally, people are shining a little light on this beautiful prairie land of ours.
Brandi: I've attended the past two years so it's really nice to not only be there but to look forward to playing, as well.
Graeme: I haven't had a chance to be there

yet but it's one of the fests that has more different types of bands that I'd like to see than some other fests, which have the "post-punk" and "hardcore" and "noise" nights. The only thing is it's a multi-venue fest and I just hope I don't miss some of the bands I want to see. But, with Strangled, it's our first opportunity to show what we're capable of.
Brandi: Also, our first time playing outside of Alberta.
Graeme: Obviously, it's a big step and afterwards we have a short tour with Veil through the US.

MRR: How long and where will it take you?

Graeme: Only six dates through the Midwest of the United States. It will be a good chance for us to get out and hang with people some of us have met on Rhythm of Cruelty or No Problem tours.
Brandi: And also hopefully play with some new bands.

MRR: Alright, where does this connection between St. Louis and Edmonton come from? It seems so random that two cities this far away hook up like this.

Graeme: Well, No Problem did some dates in Western Canada with Hoax in 2012 and their roadie was a guy named Joe Sulier who I became instant "bros" with on the tour. He just had this chewed up look in his eye and I felt like he was my kinda people.

MRR: So, instead of a sparkle in the eye you appreciate a more deranged gaze.

Graeme: Yeah, with all those guys, even the Hoax fellas; everyone was doing acid and jumping in bushes. We all instantly connected. So upon meeting him he gave me a demo for a band he was in called Voight-Kampff with Colin from Formaldehyde Junkies, whom I also knew. No Problem did a few shows with them later in the Midwest and when we were in St. Louis, it was so much fun!

MRR: Is now the time you tell Kansas City the truth?

Graeme: Ha! We fucked up! We were suppose to play KC next but had too much joy juice the night before. Matt and Warren were in "St. Louis Sucks" tees and rollerblades, wrestling in the streets. Right then I realized we wouldn't be able to make it to Kansas City the next day.
Brandi: Ashley (from Voight-Kampff and Veil) and I had met randomly beforehand on the internet through our art so it was really great when Rhythm of Cruelty went through St. Louis, got to meet her in person and create such a wonderful friendship from that.

MRR: You're both collage artists; can you talk about how that relationship has taken off?

Graeme: Sometimes, they'll cut out a picture of a peepee and put it in a veevee, hahaha!
Brandi: Shut up! Omit that please.

MRR: That will not be omitted. Censorship is not the way it goes down here.

Brandi: Oh lord, it was an instant friendship and it was great to be inspired by another person. It was really rewarding to meet her and we had an art show together in Edmonton last year.

MRR: It obviously helps having a hard copy to send to people that want to buy your music. How has having a LP help project the band outside the local music scene?

Graeme: It's been sweet but the trials and trib–

MRR: Hold on. Brandi, are you actually going to try and answer questions while stuffing a hot dog in your mouth?

Graeme: Everyone should know that Moira BBQ'd up some smokies.
Moira: Jumbo veggie dogs!
Everyone: Jumbies!
Graeme: But really, you at Crude City believed in us enough to put out our record even though we weren't going to tour.

MRR: I didn't know that! This is the first I've heard of this! Yaaay, finally they're going on tour!

Moira: You got your wish.

MRR: In all seriousness, the 12" has only been out since December so it's not that long afterwards that you decided to go out.

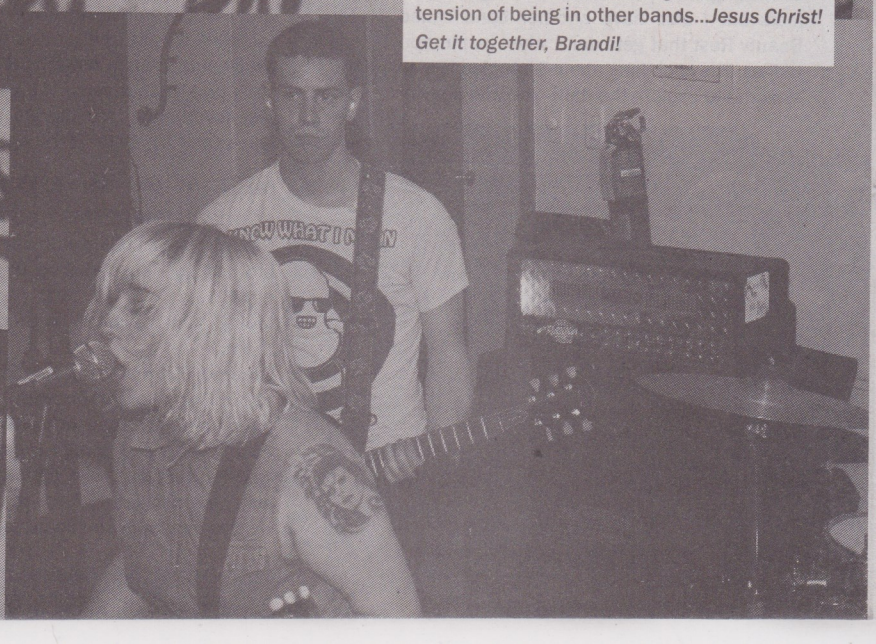
Graeme: But I've been bringing copies on No Problem tours with Night Birds and our solo Euro trip and people are curious or have heard it. As much as I can be resistant to the internet, it shows it can be useful too.

MRR: Unfortunately, it was released at a time of poor economics in North America when shipping for records is at an all-time high.

Moira: And the Canadian dollar is equal to the peso!

MRR: Graeme, you were an integral part of the recording process and also the art design of the album jacket.

Graeme: With the recording stuff, it's an extension of being in other bands...*Jesus Christ! Get it together, Brandi!*



MRR: Brandi is either choking or trying to stuff more of the hot dog into her mouth. I love how before the interview I was like, "Don't you guys wanna eat first because this might be a bit distracting?" And everyone's response was, "No, it'll be fine." The readers will be sure to smell some mustard.

Moira: There is no mustard!

Nick: It's a goddamn shame!!

Graeme: Ewww, what's this government ketchup we're eating though? It tastes like dog blood!

MRR: Alright, back on track, recording process, speak about that only.

Graeme: For me, learning how to record something was from being in other bands and being recorded myself. At the time we laid down these tracks, it was when we needed to take our minds off some tragedy in our personal lives by doing something creative and positive.

Moira: Doing that album came at the perfect time because every song took on a new meaning. The artwork really plays into the emotional outlet of the album because it's grim as hell. Looking at that, I see where I was at that time, and know I chose an image that was shocking. Like, it is a dead body. And that slapped me in the face with the reality of death. That was a famous actress who was immortalized more in her death. Probably the most popular photo ever taken of her. Now, I feel weird about it especially after being so close to the light that death shines but it just captures the dark crevice of my mind at that moment.

MRR: What's next in terms of recordings and releases?

Graeme: The writing process is a bit slow going but some stuff is coming together so maybe we'll have a "four banger" coming out soon.

Brandi: That's a 7".

Moira: The new material is awesome and I think it will show a maturation of our sound. It's still dark and captures that essence but it shows we're taking the songwriting a bit more seriously.

MRR: I've always had a hard time putting my finger on who you sound like or are influenced by. Have you heard some comparisons that have blown you away, where you can't understand why they hear that?

Graeme: Obviously, we get *Beat The Bastards*-era Exploited all the time.

Moira: I've heard Jefferson Airplane...

Graeme: What?!

Moira: Also, Ramones meets Black Sabbath...

Everyone: I have never...heard...that...ever... no...

MRR: Were you tripping on acid when you heard this?

Graeme: One thing, when they hear Moi's voice is X.

Moira: Christian Death maybe.

Graeme: I hear Rudimentary Peni even though no one really agrees.

MRR: Is there anyone you have played with or have heard that you feel people who don't frequent the local music scene should be paying attention to?

Nick: I really liked that Postman band from Calgary we played with earlier this year.

Brandi: Arielle's new band, Janitor Scum are great live. Our shows have been pretty sparse too so we don't become oversaturated.

Graeme: We just got to play with Pleasure Leftists recently here and that was a great show.

MRR: Graeme, this isn't the first time you've collaborated with a sibling, what are some of the similarities / differences between Moira and Luke who you played with in Wednesday Night Heroes?

Brandi: You don't get to punch Moira the way you and Luke would go at it.

Nick: Or ram her head against the wall.

Graeme: Me and Luke would cause more physical damage to each other where Moira and I are on a more psychological level.

Brandi: They love to torment each other.

Graeme: Obviously, I've been in bands most of my life with people who are close to me but that's what I find the most rewarding but they can be the most volatile, as well.

Moira: But when you do have it out, you know you're gonna make up because you're family, at the end of the day.

Brandi: For you guys, the end of the week maybe.

MRR: With two women and two men in the band, who's winning the battle of the sexes?

Brandi: There's no battle but I do get picked on a lot.

Moira: We don't see gender.

Graeme: I think that whole thing of being a gender conscious band has never been a thing for us.

Brandi: We just see each other as friends and musicians. If they do point out the fact that there are two females in the band, then what are you really telling me? It makes no difference to me if I was the only girl or it was all-girl.

Graeme: I do feel that's been always present in Edmonton. From when I was a kid until now, there were always women at shows, there were always women in bands, doing zines, whatever. I have been kicked in the face plenty of times here by women stage diving. It's not that strange to see both genders participating so to be in a band with women is...

Moira: It's not a novelty which I think a lot of people try and push, "Oh, you have females in your band...here's an extra drink ticket."

Graeme: Ladies night!

Moira: I do feel women like to see other women perform and that in turn attracts females to our shows which is great.

Graeme: And Moira is a banshee on stage and goes off like a cat being released from a bag after shaking it and tossing it on stage...

Brandi: Those are some good final words, now give us some meows!

strangledsounds.bandcamp.com

DIY Space For London is a cooperatively run venue in South London that just celebrated its opening weekend after three years of fundraising. See diyspaceforlondon.org for more info on how to support it and get involved.

Clockwise from top left, photos by Simon Parris unless otherwise noted:

Priests, Good Throb, DIY Space for London co-op members (Andrew Northrop), Cult Syndrome, DSFL (Sean Haughton), La Misma.

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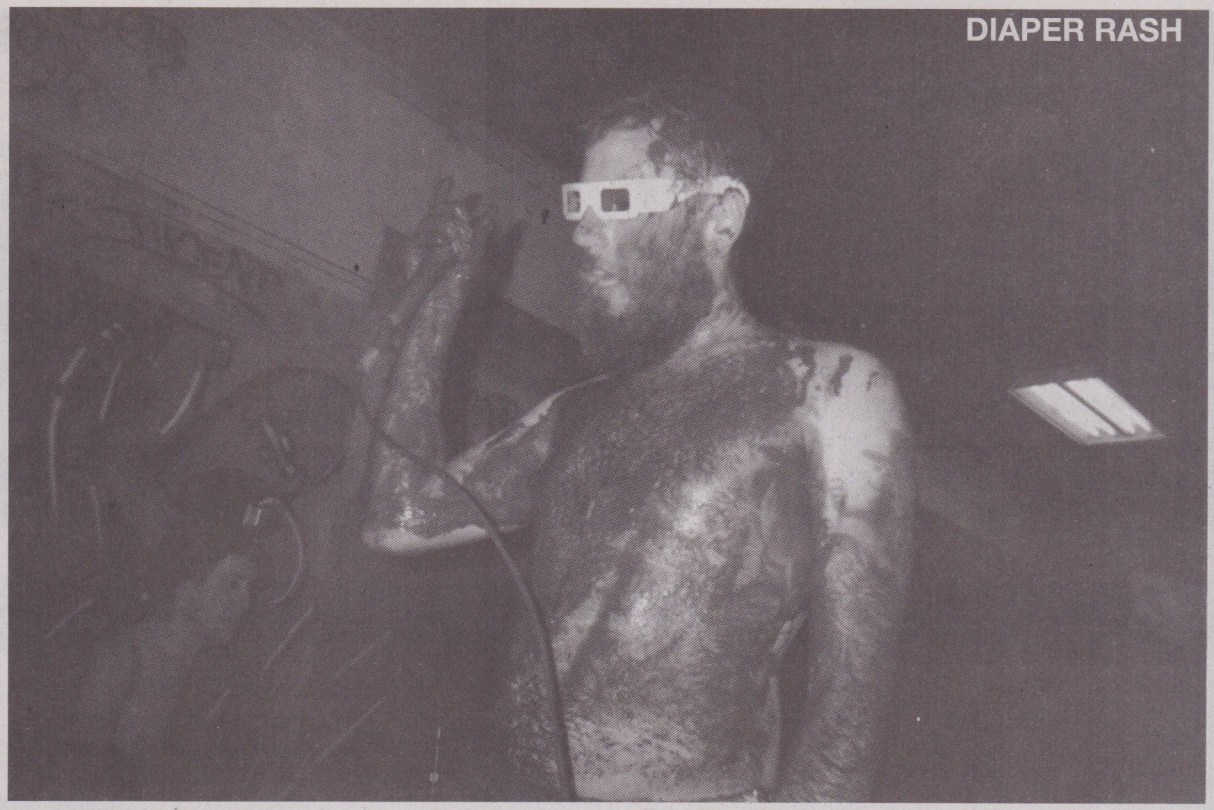
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POPULATION

A little over four years ago, a group of punks and misfits gathered in a now-closed dingy dive bar to see a band called Population. Following their ambitious wax-sealed demo cassette was a series of increasingly solid singles and EPs released under HoZac, BLVD, and most recently a uniquely hand-crafted 45 with Nostalgium Directive. Population came crashing onto the Chicago underground wearing their own brand of Midwestern punk and hardcore, with intensely charismatic vocals and powerfully heartfelt performances. They have slowly but surely evolved from their heavily rigid punk roots into a nuanced post-punk outfit possessing the depth and imagination necessary to cross boundaries while still maintaining a poignant sense of nostalgia. In the years since their debut they have only seen one lineup change, which paved the way for a long awaited full-length LP. Their new record was released through Costa Mesa, California's Mass Media Records and for the first time ever, the boys of Population sat down to do an in-depth interview for Maximum Rocknroll.

Interview and introduction by Aimee Lee.

MRR: You are all aging punks working full-time jobs, with deep roots in the local and regional punk scenes. This new album is sonically malevolent in ways and yet hopeful. Your sound has evolved and matured intuitively over time, especially over the last year leading up to the new LP.

Julian: I think we've grown as a band together, like as a uniform. For me, I know I've gotten better. I used to play in a shoegaze band. I used to play slower; playing with this band I know I have improved in my drumming ability.

Benny: I think we've all grown musically. When we first wrote our demo, it was very rudimentary compared to what we are doing now. Back then I had just picked up the bass and some of those songs could have been Oi! songs. Not to say I am some virtuoso bass player now, but as Julian mentioned, with the help of everybody here, I think we've all grown as musicians a bit. Jimmy joining the band has really set the bar a bit higher because he's an accomplished tunesmith. I loved his old band and at least when he joined [Population] I felt like we all had to step up our game. Kudos to Jim.

Keelan: Jimmy was in Black Math. We met him doing gigs with them. I think we've evolved kind of organically like any band will. You keep at something long enough and the skills develop and the work, the output, the art, whatever you want to call it, becomes more complex and I think more honest, too, because we're not trying so hard.

Jimmy: Having joined the band last year, I got to learn the old songs and started seeing how the keyboards fit in. When we started writing the new songs I got to see what I liked about the keyboard style and how that could be changed. A lot of those keyboard lines, I absolutely love and still play or use. This just gave me an opportunity to work around them.

Benny: Everybody pitches in. Now it's not only one person writing the bulk of a song.

Keelan: As far as the different moods in the album: like any band starting out, we had an idea in mind so we started with that. Back then we were trying harder and now it's more honest so sometimes things come across differently. We're not afraid to get those hooks in there. If a song's going to sound poppy, great; if a song is going to sound dark and malevolent, that's beautiful too. There's beauty in different forms, especially with music. That's one of the things I like best about the album and if you look at those ten songs as a set it goes to different places. I really enjoy that; I enjoy the differences between the highs and the lows.

Gabe: It's been fun messing with tone. I haven't had the opportunity to play in a band that allows me to adjust my tone so much. Since the beginning of the band I've gone through about four guitars and three amps, even borrowed a couple. My pedals have remained the same but I haven't had the opportunity to explore them until now so I've learning more about their wavelengths and frequency rates. Coming into writing the new LP there was kind of a stroke of luck because my last amp broke and I had to get it fixed. The sound was captured at that point where the guitar and the tone were captured to a tee. I got a new amp and I am still trying to find my tone with it and the new amp's a little brighter in a sense.

Julian: It's a little more dance-y too, I think now, being a bit more poppy.

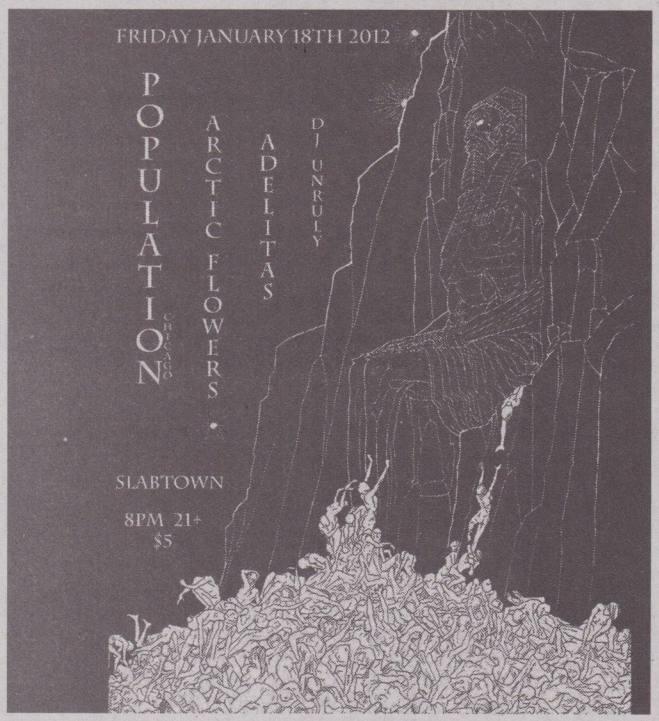
MRR: One of the stand-out songs on the new LP is "Spears of Silence," with its elegant guitar and haunting vocals. From songs like that to the energetic closer, "City of Dead," you seem to be heading in the direction of what you have always done best: dark, almost minimal deathrock. Not quite angst-ridden but moody and brilliant on all fronts. So let's continue with the guitars. Gabe, how is your new guitar?

Gabe: Right now I am in SG world. The Gibson SG. It's been hard getting there, you know, affording it and everything. As far as writing that deathrock stuff, it's something I have always liked, from the beginning. It's been a while since we've actually done something kind of deathrock-y that spans from post-punk and it was fun to do. It evolved and is very different from the way it was written.

MRR: You seem to have really warmed up to this new formula in the band. Songs like "Sleepwalker" are perfect. It's such a clear moment of solidarity and showcases all of your high-points. Quite simply, it soars. Can you talk a little about how this song was realized? It is quite the unexpected pleasure.

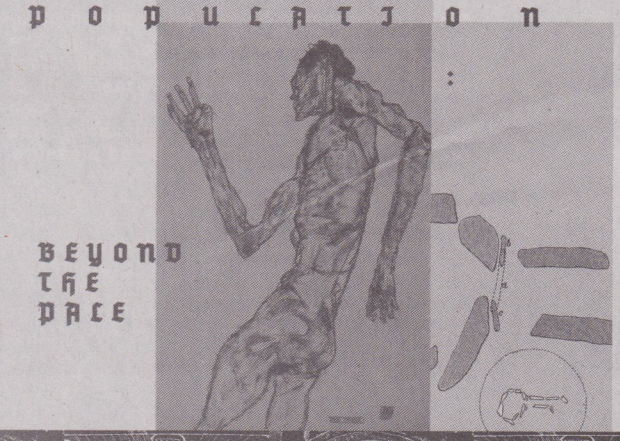
Benny: Sometimes you just have those moments where everything gels. I remember just messing around here with a very simple little bass hook and Gabe's guitar just nailed it. It took this very simple, almost rudimentary bass line to something higher and then with Jim's keyboards it just swoons. One of the things I like about this LP is that I have seen Gabe grow as a musician. He scales back when he needs to; he knows where to

drop and when to force his guitar in there. You know, you listen to records and you think, "Oh the guitar is sort of overwhelming there..." but I really like Gabe's guitar on this LP. He knew where to shine and where to let the other instruments and vocals command the songs and I'm really happy with it.



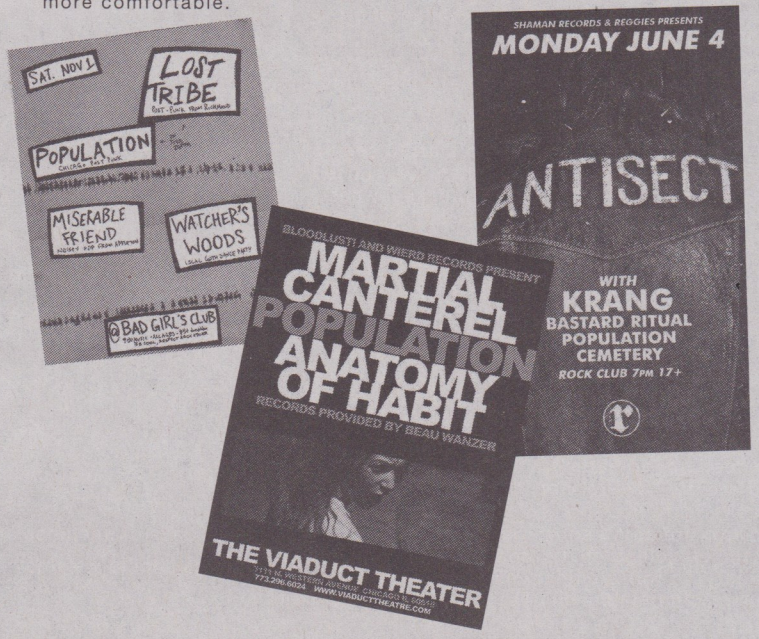
Keelan: Musically, we've never been a one-trick pony. I think we have some songs that are similar but with this album it goes into very different places and we're like that as musicians, too, in how we relate to each other. Sometimes the guitars are up front and driving the song, sometimes they are scaled back and provide subtle, technical things in the background. Sometimes it is the rhythm that's driving. Other times I get to come forward with the vocals or the keys come out. We're not purely a guitar or rhythm band. It keeps things interesting to me.
Benny: We did have a lot of personal issues amongst all of us, you know, personal family dynamics and changes with band members leaving.

Keelan: It's a labor of love. We're not a full-time band.
Benny: No, we're not and it may have taken us a while to record an LP but we didn't rush things and we would have even wanted to extend things a little more in the studio but due to budget restraints we couldn't, since we were paying for all of it ourselves and we didn't want to work every day and keep paying for it. We always knew we wanted to take our time with this LP. We had two 7-inches before this and we toured behind them. We worked our asses off for a band where everyone has a full-time job and this is done on the side as a serious, passionate thing. We need to play. We have to play. This is the sort of band where everybody hears something different in us. I like that people hear different things in what we are writing. I do think that with this LP we have highs and lows and I am glad you noticed that.



MRR: I really felt that Side A was brighter and more optimistic while Side B was darker and more ominous, beginning with "True North."
Jim: I think our songs are always like, elbowing for room or elbowing for different territory whether it's genre or mood. We have found a way to be pretty expansive in how we write songs and still have it make sense as Population. It's a lot of fun being in a band like this because you don't feel pigeon-holed in what you can play or what you can do.
Keelan: We all like a lot of different music like most people and we're not a bunch of kids either. We're not stuck in a teenage rebellion phase where everything we listen to is angry. We're like any human beings well into adulthood. We're complex people. We have emotions that go different places so these things come out in different ways. It's always interesting trying to write a set before a show. We sometimes have little arguments. It's not like we're just playing one song after another and it's not going to make a difference but it does for us, it feels different. For myself, I feel like we're on the right track. I think everybody feels that way.

MRR: One of the most notable changes over the last year has been the introduction of Jim Lacy. Previously, the Korg would just blaze in and out of guitar riffs with a deep buzzing, sound effect-like barren presence. The new synth presence is wider and warmer and more chorus-driven and this has a lot to do with the Nord Lead 2 that Jim favors. Jim, do you think this change has been a catalyst that has helped to push everyone into exploring new song structures and styles?
Jim: I know I've learned a lot as far as that keyboard goes while playing with this group and also [about] finding room and finding my own space. When playing with guitar, bass, vocals, and drums there is a unique space within each song where a keyboard can fit. Then there are a million ways a keyboard is not going to fit. That's been a lot of fun to figure out for each song.
Keelan: And I think it's opened up a lot of new doors. Benny said that right from the beginning and I agree. A band is only as good as its members and I've always been wary about changing members. If it's too many members, it's a different band. The thing is we decided pretty quickly that we wanted to keep going. We weren't done with what we had started and committed ourselves to do. We were worried about finding the right person and Jim agreed to humble himself to us.
Julian: When he came in to the first practice, I remember going out for a cigarette and turning around and we were all looking at each other with a thumbs-up, immediately after he played with us.
Benny: It's a different sound now and I am happy with it but I was very scared thinking that we would bring in a keyboardist who would make us sound too different. But I feel like we're a whole new band now. I've always been very critical too about bands continuing once an original member leaves but this just felt right. We didn't push it and we didn't force it. I came into this thing thinking that if the keyboardist changed the whole band completely then I am out but we gelled with Jim and it worked.
Keelan: More than a change, it felt like an evolution. We had kind of stagnated for a little while. In a way, getting a new perspective and a new talent on board helped freshen things up and become more comfortable.



MRR: The bass is notable at points on this new record, especially with tracks like "Wine on the Lilies" but it showcases a softer side of Population as well. It feels like you are all more settled into your roles in the band. What does the future look like for Population?

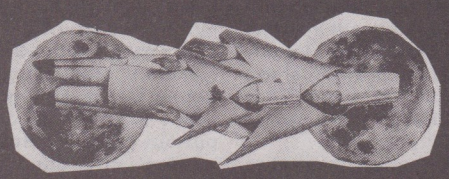
Benny: We don't do this on purpose to sound one way or another. We do have this dark brooding sound going but we just write things as they come out. My background is definitely in punk and hardcore and I still play in hardcore bands and I still go to hardcore shows. But I have always been a sucker for a good pop song and I love great hooks and great lines. Perhaps subconsciously or perhaps on purpose, I tend to write that kind of song. I have an affinity for that whole late '70s /early '80s Manchester post-punk sound. That's what I have always strived for with my bass. Sometimes what I write on my bass has been really sappy and cheesy but with the help of keyboard and guitar a simple bass line turns into something else.

MRR: The vocals in most Population songs do have a tendency to carry their own rhythm. This signature of yours has only become more accessible with nice hooks like in "True North." I have found myself getting the chorus part of that song stuck in my head a lot. Population seem to have reached this new level of pop-oriented accessibility. Do you feel this element is something we will see more of in the future?

Keelan: I mean, we still have our feet in punk rock, you know, our roots. But I feel like there was more of that before. I feel like there were hooks, just different kinds of hooks. There were songs like "Croatoan", which you mentioned before. I feel like that's a catchy song! And it's essentially a punk song. "True North," though, I feel has a drive that is a really important part of the song...because the vocals and verses are just raw. I had some trouble figuring out what I wanted to bring to the chorus parts. Ultimately, it was to create space, allowing the music over it to do its thing...allowing something more spectral. That's something I wouldn't have tried doing before.

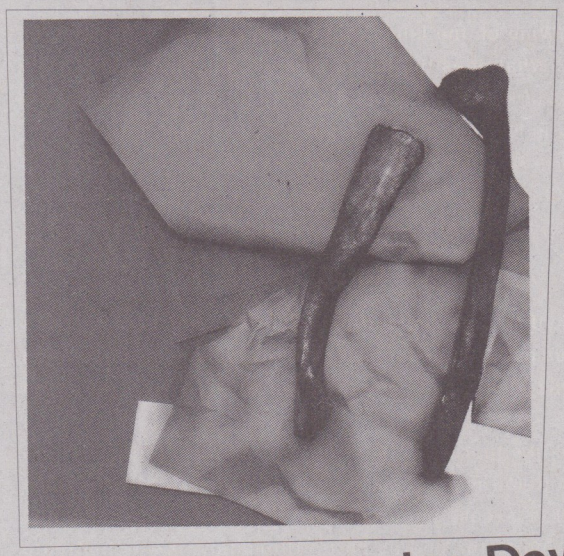
The "they" in that first line is us, as we've always lived in a light separate from other animals under the sun

It strikes me as insane the way we wage war as a matter of course, all the while mourning our dead as though we'd give anything to hear them speak to us again.



MRR: One of the most daunting songs off the new record is the baroque and cataclysmic "Volkslied," which translates to "Folk Song" in German. There are many beautiful references to violence and desolation along with the tragedy of human warfare. You start out saying how "They've always lived in nowhere, circumlunar roads..." You seem to navigate a lunarscape throughout your melancholy. What is it about this song that evokes such intensity?

Keelan: "Volkslied" is written from a dark perspective on the human condition. The "they" in that first line is us, as we've always lived in a light separate from other animals under the sun (who don't host conflicts amongst themselves for profit or kill for greed or angry faiths). It strikes me as insane the way we wage war as a matter of course, all the while mourning our dead as though we'd give anything to hear them speak to us again. We build monuments as testaments to eternity, but we know they're doomed to crumble; we'll rake the earth for temporal wealth, heedless to the waste we're leaving behind for our children...It's all so conflicting, so hypocritical. I often seriously believe that we're, as a species, insane. It's no dream, unfortunately—it's humanity as it's always been. I mean, let's not kid ourselves. We ourselves were born into the bloodiest century in the history of the human race, when centuries-old notions of honor in combat became archaic under hailstorms of mechanized warfare and the looming specter of nuclear desolation. Where millions upon millions of men and women and children can die in just days of needless and wanton destruction. What do we make of our old traditions and beliefs under such bleak circumstances? What songs should we sing? The gods are dead, and high art is just a jaded one-liner. We'll be gorging ourselves until an asteroid tells us to stop.



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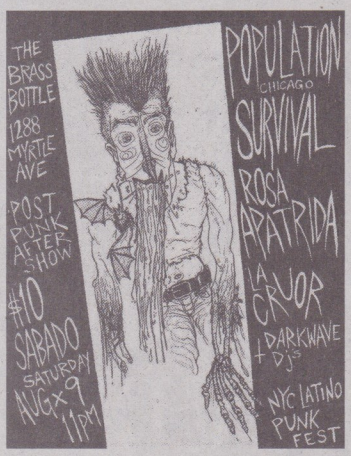

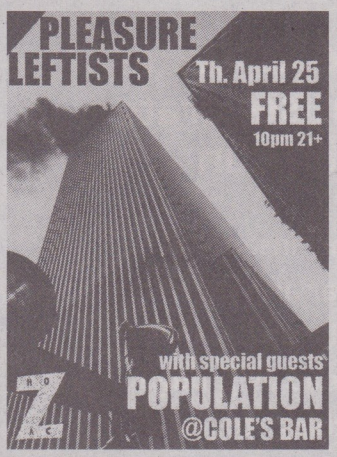

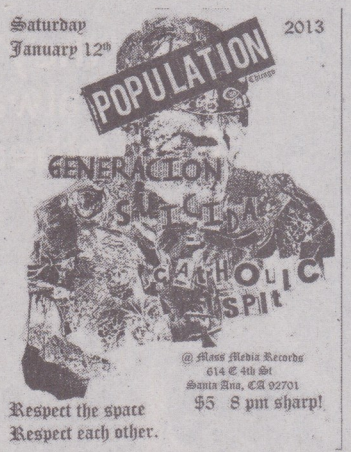

MRR: So many of your songs are a thrill to read; from the overall story to the singular lines as you charge through them. In "Pray for Rain" there is an air of bitterness to the words, almost as if you're spitting them out politely. It seems like you're ashamed of the boys' club as you end with "strung along by guile." Then you later go into the slow ballad, "Spears of Silence," which is steeped in silence and refrain. Yet, as personal as these songs start to feel, as you understand the words, there is the deep sense of storytelling within sharp insights into the human condition. What do you think of that? Are there moments of a more autobiographical nature in these works since you have all gone through such a heavy few years?

Keelan: "Pray For Rain" is indeed a bitter song lyrically. I wanted to address some roles in gender that are rarely discussed, at least as far as men concerned. So much about the male dynamic is this idea that it's linear, when in truth we're a grey template at birth. We're products of culture, of course, and there's a maelstrom of pain in so many of us that's dying to get out; unfortunately males, even still in this society, are instilled with the notion that pain is failure and by extension that failure would imply insignificance. So it's rarely addressed, and I think we're suffering from it as a society; men who don't know how to deal with themselves. It's the same pressure to conform wherever we look, from sexuality to strength, gender to dream. Sometimes I want to be someone else, you know? Shake the expectations that have been hanging over me since childhood into the gutter. We are what we are, but we're supposed to be something else. I just want to weep without consequences. I want to stand up for myself by walking away. I'm sure these same issues conflict those of other genders, but I'm commenting from a first person perspective.

I think my writing lyrically is a consequence of commentary informed by personal experience. I've seen enough to write a novel—most of us in this band have, probably entire sequences. I grew up in a punk scene full of lots of lost souls, and some of those are really truly lost now and I'll never touch or see or cry with them again. A song off our first EP, Centrifuge, was written about a dear friend of mine who hung himself in prison a few years earlier. I still have dreams about him. "Spear of Silence" is really about just this sort of thing, dwelling on the past and the ones we've loved and lost, about times long gone and the dreams we've forgot. It's a hard space to be in, sitting in your silence, with nothing but the voices of ghosts to keep you company. I've always had issues with that...I don't think I'm the only one.

MRR: Population has toured extensively throughout the Midwest and East Coast. You just did your first ever West Coast tour last year. You played a few shows in Puerto Rico at the beginning of this year. As far as booking shows and logistics with touring, this is something you guys do on your own right? I understand you utilize the old punk network for venues and crash space.

Benny: Through this whole punk and hardcore lifestyle, I have had a label and played in a few of my own hardcore bands, so when we do tour, we tour with friends' bands and we stay with friends's bands. It's all just a part of this DIY network made up of houses and DIY spaces. They treat us well and I think we all enjoy that. Sometimes it's nice to be able to play a club with a nice PA but a lot of the time we just play basement shows and they're just as much fun. I have been fortunate enough to be able to tour a lot through this network.

Keelan: It's just the hardcore network that formed over 30 years ago. I mean things are still like that. You go to a different city and there's still at least a couple different bands you talk to and you make connections and sleep on people's floors, eat whatever local foods they have that are interesting, try to see the sights, and meet more new people. It's a very personal network, I mean, not much of this is impersonal; where it's going through owners per se... Have we ever even signed a contract? We're a DIY band. I've been screening shirts for years and I've always been of the mind that if we can do these things ourselves then we can sell these things a lot cheaper than people who have them made by a company and then turn around and sell them for $20 or more a pop. It only costs around $1.50 per shirt to buy them yourself and so you make a screen and get some ink and just *make* them!

Benny: I always think it's interesting when people outside the punk scene ask how we do it. How do you tour so much? How do you put out records? How do you make all your shirts? Well, because we don't sit around and wait for somebody to do it for us. It is so unrealistic to think some label is going to swoop you up and print your shirts and book your tours. No, I mean, we just do it. We go on tour and we *do* it. I think that we are lucky in that we come from the punk scene and we just get there because we have to. Because nobody is going to hand you shit. The majority of our shows are still punk shows but when we play with a band that isn't punk, they are just dumbfounded with our punk ethic. I mean, just get off your ass and do it, no matter what kind of music you are playing! Stop trying to play these shows where you hope some record producer will come out and discover you. That's never going to happen! On the flipside there are people who think this is beneath them. They're never going to sleep on floors and they won't tour under shitty conditions. And, well, it's their loss.

Jim: You make your own opportunities; you create your own luck by putting yourself out there and working. I think we've got a good work ethic too. We practice a lot, we play out a lot and we keep putting ourselves out there.

Keelan: We want to see through it all. We want to leave behind artifacts, records, and have the experiences while we can. There's something to be said for just seizing the moment but all of these opportunities are at anyone's disposal.

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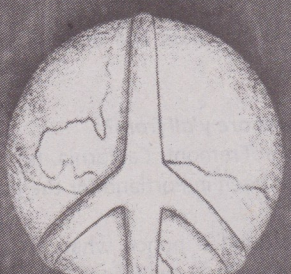

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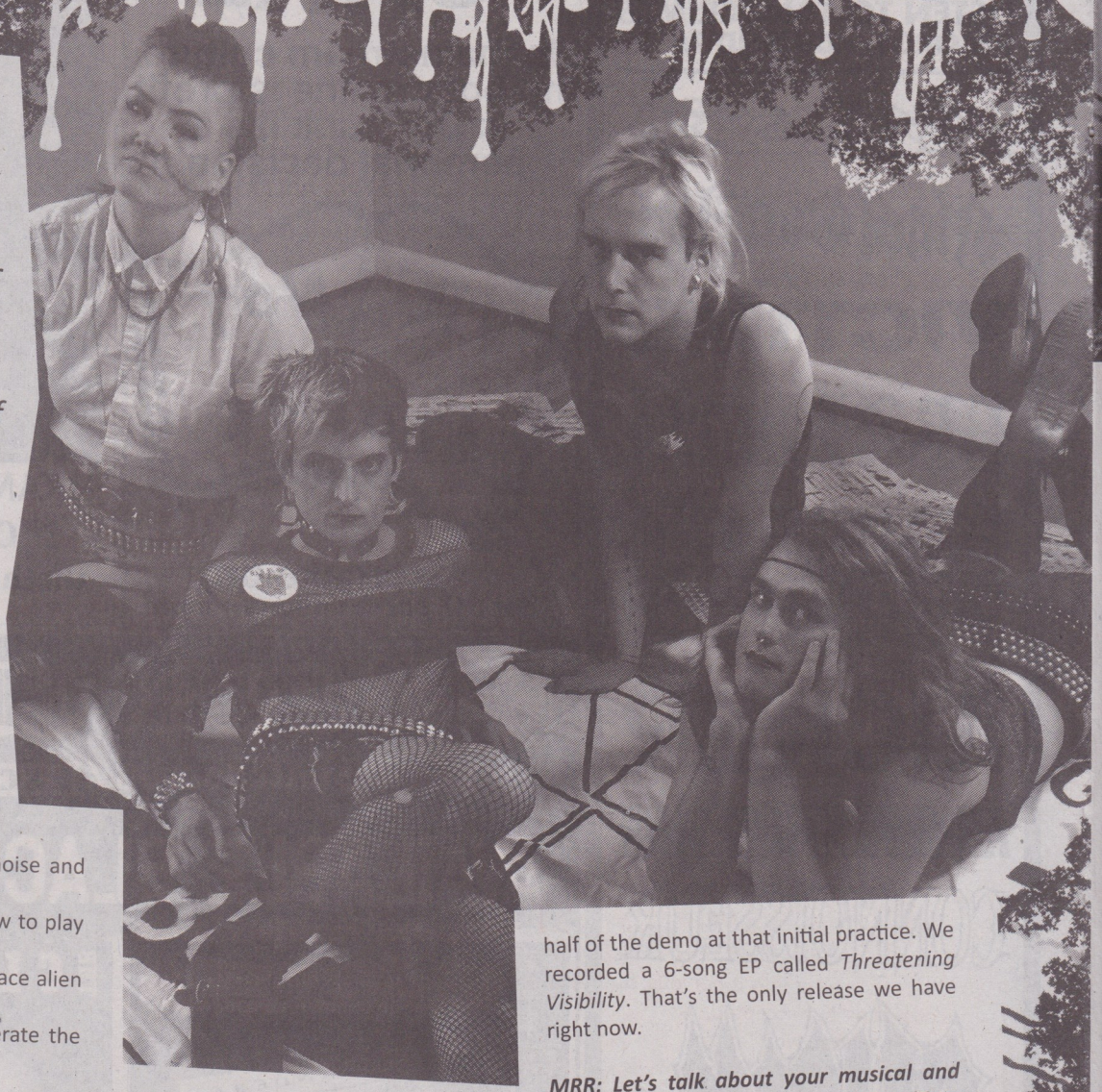
Emasculator

A visceral vessel of expressive experimental noise punk, Emasculator from Portland, OR, have smeared their raw power across the South on their recent US tour, two weeks after the release of their demo, Threatening Visibility. *We talk on conquering shame, trans visibility, pandrogyny, intention, aesthetics and the culture of hardcore.*



Interview and introduction by Anna Vo.
Photos by Anna Vo and Fez.

MRR: Introduce yourselves.

SYLYS: I'm Sylys. I do vocals, synth noise and some of the samples.

SAVI: I'm Savi. I don't really know how to play guitar, but I can approximate it.

GARY: I'm Gary. I'm a dripping wet space alien baby.

BILLIE: I'm Billie. I play bass and operate the samples.

MRR: What towns are y'all from?

SYLYS: I grew up in Fremont, California. It's in the East Bay. I've been in Portland for the last six years.

SAVI: I moved around a bunch when I was young, but spent a lot of my time in Raleigh, North Carolina, and Asheville, North Carolina.

GARY: I was abducted from my home planet and taken to Dublin, California where I was born and raised. It was a hellhole.

BILLIE: I'm from South Carolina. I lived in Columbia for almost ten years. I moved to Portland almost two years ago.

MRR: Origin story? Band forming?

SAVI: We all kind of met independently on the fringes of the queer scene and the punk scene, and we had an interest in noise punk and hardcore, so we all came together and formed the band in the hallway of our old house.

SYLYS: I'd known everybody for a year or more. I didn't know anyone very well until we all lived together. In the hallway of our house after a show, we discussed how we were really missing noise punk, and how we wanted to make a band around experiences we were having with gender, drug addiction, mental health...

BILLIE: When the band started it almost wasn't intentional. We were all there, and there was gear there, [we thought] let's make some noise. We ended up writing half of the demo at that initial practice. We recorded a 6-song EP called *Threatening Visibility*. That's the only release we have right now.

MRR: Let's talk about your musical and aesthetic evolution over time. How things have shifted or matured?

SYLYS: We originally talked about being really into Zyanose, really heavy brutal noise-inspired punk. But then as we had band meetings and discussed things, other things came into it—like I'm really into Temple of Psychick Youth, Psychic TV, Throbbing Gristle, stuff that's about exploring aspects of yourself and your consciousness and empowering yourself to validate yourself, *to feel deeply who you are*. And to find an aesthetic that fits that, and exploring harsh noise and things like that, sampling, introducing the synthesizer, for example, just trying stuff out instead of being fixed to one thing.

EMASCULATOR

MRR: What is the relationship between trying things out musically and aesthetically, and then reflecting on them? You talked about feeling deeply who you are. How would you describe that reflexive process?

SYLYS: I think it's really intuitive. I can't really describe it. We all really click. And we listen to each other a lot, and we try things out that we all really want to try.

BILLIE: Usually practices are spontaneous contributions or suggestions that people may or may not have created beforehand.

MRR: Do you feel like you listen to each other better than in other bands that you've been in?

BILLIE: Definitely. We are all really good friends. Our dynamic is very friendly and personal and supportive, which is very cool.

SAVI: This is the first time I feel like I make a large contribution to the music and aesthetics.

GARY: I feel like we never have to compromise because we are open towards each other.

SYLYS: I really agree with that. This is my first band. I went into it nervous, but I feel like nothing but accepted, like an equal. It doesn't matter what anyone's experience is with any particular thing. It feels like we actually care about each other, that's how it works the best for us, and for me. I've really appreciated that. To not feel ashamed to express what I want to try out.

MRR: Do you think that is because you go into this holistically? Let's talk about identities and their relationship to playing music and being in the world.

SAVI: For me, our aesthetic of Pandrogyny as expressed by Temple of Psychick Youth and Psychic TV is a concept of an identity that isn't fixed. It's a very open and fluid way of understanding identity and gender. I'm a transfeminine person, and I have to use that label and identity in order to be understood by the world, which isn't ideal for me, even though that is a material reality. I feel as though that concept—most of us in this band are trans or genderqueer—has been an important part of our band's growth and is more or less transmitted through our music.

GARY: Our music is a very creative and therapeutic outlet, where we can exist in our identities and be completely comfortable. It sort of feels like a bubble but we are threatening visibility.

MRR: How was tour set up in terms of context and awareness, and how was the reception?

BILLIE: Tour was set up intentionally to almost be a no-coast tour. Primarily small towns in the middle of the country, and the south, where Savi and I are from. It would be safe to say that both Savi and I moved to the Pacific Northwest specifically for our own safety, but we do have our roots and lots of friends [in the South]. Almost every queer person I've ever known in the South has either physically relocated or died. Which is a shame, because I think most creative things come out of small isolated spaces. We cut the country in half, from Portland to Miami and back. It was kind of intimidating—half the tour was good friends, and half the tour were strangers. That was pretty scary, but we made it. It was pretty hard, it's pretty cool that we still love each other.

We all really click.

And we listen to each other a lot, and we try things out that we all really want to try.

MRR: So what about the interface between the bubble and the world? Essentially, you're a band in public space. What do you want that interaction to be? What is the impact you are trying to shape?

SYLYS: The big thing for me is a non-binary. I'm not a man or a woman. I'm transmasculine, but I'm a femme. With a lot of people I've felt like my gender is invisible, like, "How do I talk about it?" because it doesn't fit well in any box and that can be really painful. But I know the more I open up about it, the closer I feel to other people who share this experience, which has happened with Emasculator. I really love everyone, and I know they love me. I'm also a sex worker, which I enjoy doing very much but as a result I don't feel seen a lot with my gender since I perform as a woman while working. So it's extremely empowering and validating to me, to support others, to make music about these experiences, to be able to connect to other people. When we were on tour, we connected to people who were isolated about that kind of thing. Being able to support and connect with others makes my life more fulfilling and I'm really grateful.

MRR: How was it scary?

BILLIE: We all prepared financially three months before tour but didn't know if that was enough since none of us had been to any of the places between Portland and the Carolinas. And as we were coming back west we didn't have any more shows after Houston and had to rely on the remaining band fund. The tour was actually pretty successful and we all made our way back home.

SAVI: It was a very strenuous tour. Our demo had only been out a couple weeks. We played small towns across the Midwest, with younger queer people in bands, which made me feel like us going on tour was really important, making music like this and having

queerness as part of the aesthetic and design. It was bittersweet going to the South and seeing old friends and how those towns had changed.

BILLIE: I noticed that at each show some people were introduced to noise punk or queer punk for the first time, had their notions challenged, and approached us after the show, wanting to make music or noise.

GARY: We played with a diverse variety of bands. Other hardcore bands, emo bands, noise performers, crust bands...DIY punk thrives off doing something different. If you play a show with three different sounding bands, you are gonna build your community much wider.

SYLYS: It was exciting to go on tour. There were also so many awesome aspects, like being able to talk to people about how trans identity doesn't mean it's binary, this or that, there's a spectrum, etc., and you can validate your own experience, you can be your own gender. But also, with that, for me, came the aspect of: Am I safe here? Am I physically safe? In those times we had each other, and more often that not, Billie and Savi had friends where we were going.

MRR: What about being scared, like, getting gas in some small town?

GARY: It doesn't just happen in isolated places in the country, it happens in Portland, anywhere I go.

SYLYS: I feel the same way, it wasn't necessarily the locations we were going to, it was that I was sometimes visibly trans in places I was unfamiliar with. Trans visibility period can at times feel unsafe.

MRR: Like, when with strangers instead of trusted community?

BILLIE: Savi and I knew people. We could vouch for everyone booking our shows in the South. Really the only thing that seemed intimidating for me was existing in spaces in between the shows. The only incident I had was walking into a restaurant with my sister in my hometown and having every customer and worker stare at me from toe to head, which was a grounding experience.

MRR: Did you have a Statement of Intentionality when setting up the tour?

BILLIE: We as a band didn't have an official statement because the tour was booked collaboratively but for the shows that I helped book I sent organizers a blurb about my intention, about all ages spaces, being a safer space, anticipating people that don't normally come out to a punk show and an intersectional audience, and we wanted organizers to keep that in mind, to create a welcoming space.

MRR: What about...ahem, the future of the culture of hardcore?

SAVI: It is so exciting to see younger people in hardcore touring and playing in bands. I think it's really cool and important, even inspiring, seeing literal teenagers in bands. It makes me very happy.

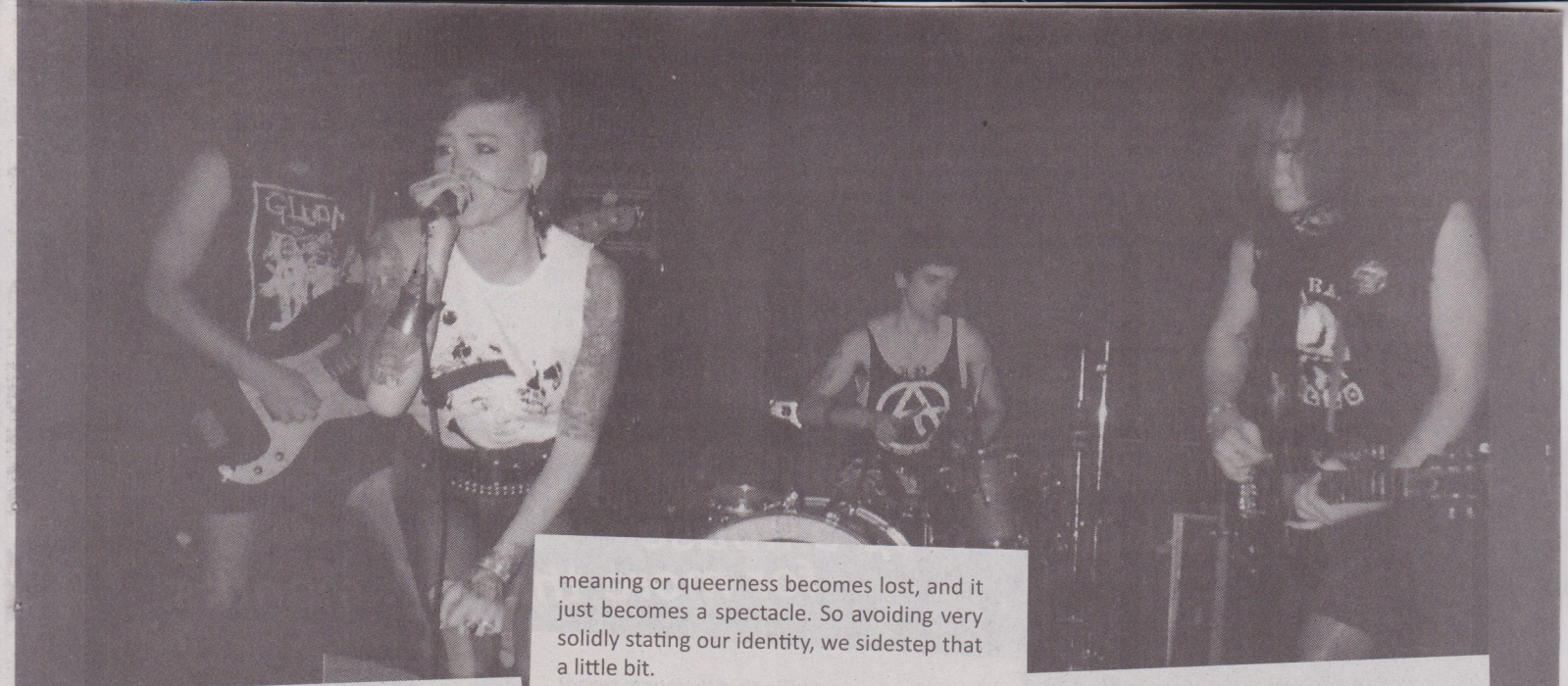
MRR: In terms of less patriarchal performers and bands?

SAVI: To me, there have been numerous waves of queer hardcore and we are in a brand new wave of that. It's really cool that there are bands where part of the aesthetic is being queer. And bands talking about what it means to be queer, and challenging values in those pre-existing structures.

GARY: With queercore bands: there is a very strong network of queer bands in the States that are doing lots of awesome things and taking a lot of charge. It comes to a point where it starts getting tokenized and categorized in this way that makes it separate, and I feel like that bubble needs to pop and bleed all over the scene.

MRR: In terms of tokenism, how do you see full integration and absorption into a dominant punk culture versus being an autonomous cell? What does that look like for you?

SYLYS: We want to play shows with all kinds of bands, and that's what we did on tour, which was super tight. Also for us, having an unflinching, no compromise stance about the issues that we are talking about. And having that platform, while sharing space with other bands with maybe different topics.



SAVI: I don't think that we would necessarily call ourselves queer hardcore. I think that we all have our own experiences of gender which is important for our sound and you literally cannot take that away from our sound but we never adopted that label.

Based on our affinity, we do play with queer bands, but we do not have any sort of separatist mentality. We play with other bands because it introduces people to things they may have never seen before, because I think the problem with hardcore is that the meaning becomes diluted. Sometimes a band becomes so big and mainstream for DIY that their meaning or queerness becomes lost, and it just becomes a spectacle. So avoiding very solidly stating our identity, we sidestep that a little bit.

GARY: Our intention is to show that you can be queer in other creative spaces.

MRR: What about your art, aesthetics, and lyrics? How have they evolved?

SYLYS: One big aspect of our band's art is pushing the limits of comfort. Not in a shock value way. Like: *what is possible with humans, period*. I try to look deep inside myself to find images from all sorts of places. They can be collaged together to reveal What Is Going On. What is oppression about—on the inside? What does it look like to feel empowered? Collage puts images together to show something that can't be explained with words, a very important part of the band's art, and has been around in punk forever.

This is the first time I've written lyrics in a band. Going into it, when we talked about the band in the hallway, the things on my mind were growing up, living in a multi-generational addict dysfunctional family, and how big of a role shame had played in the family, how shame and abuse had silenced my self, brought me near suicide, addiction, all kinds of things. And how painful that was. The biggest part of all that is isolation. And I wanted to communicate that, share that with the band, share our collective experiences, which was really fucking hard. How do we as people remove shame, work on shame, be self-loving, empowered, to take care of ourselves and ask for our needs to be met.

And the big thing for me is that my experience and gender don't have to be proven. A big part of misogyny in America, and in general, is that you have to prove your experiences and how you feel in order for it to be valid. That's been a huge struggle for me, too. I won't fucking prove it to you. That's been empowering for me. I won't prove the things that have happened to me and by trying to express that in lyrics, and having people identify, and saying, "Yeah, I can do that too."

BILLIE: The process so far is: Sylys writes the lyrics, the band gives feedback and revises collaboratively on the visual and lyrical process, and then I make art, reflecting my own experience. Related to that, the band is about purging your trauma but also about being upfront about your experiences. As a result of gas lighting and having other people deny my own experience, I've become a quiet and non-expressive person. So the art has a clear separation of foreground and background to reflect the dissonance and questioning in my own head that prevents me from speaking in the first place. Where the content is clear and distinct from the hazy and chaotic background giving an anxious, very paranoid vibe. It shows overcoming and pushing through external antagonism, and also the mire of internalized trauma.

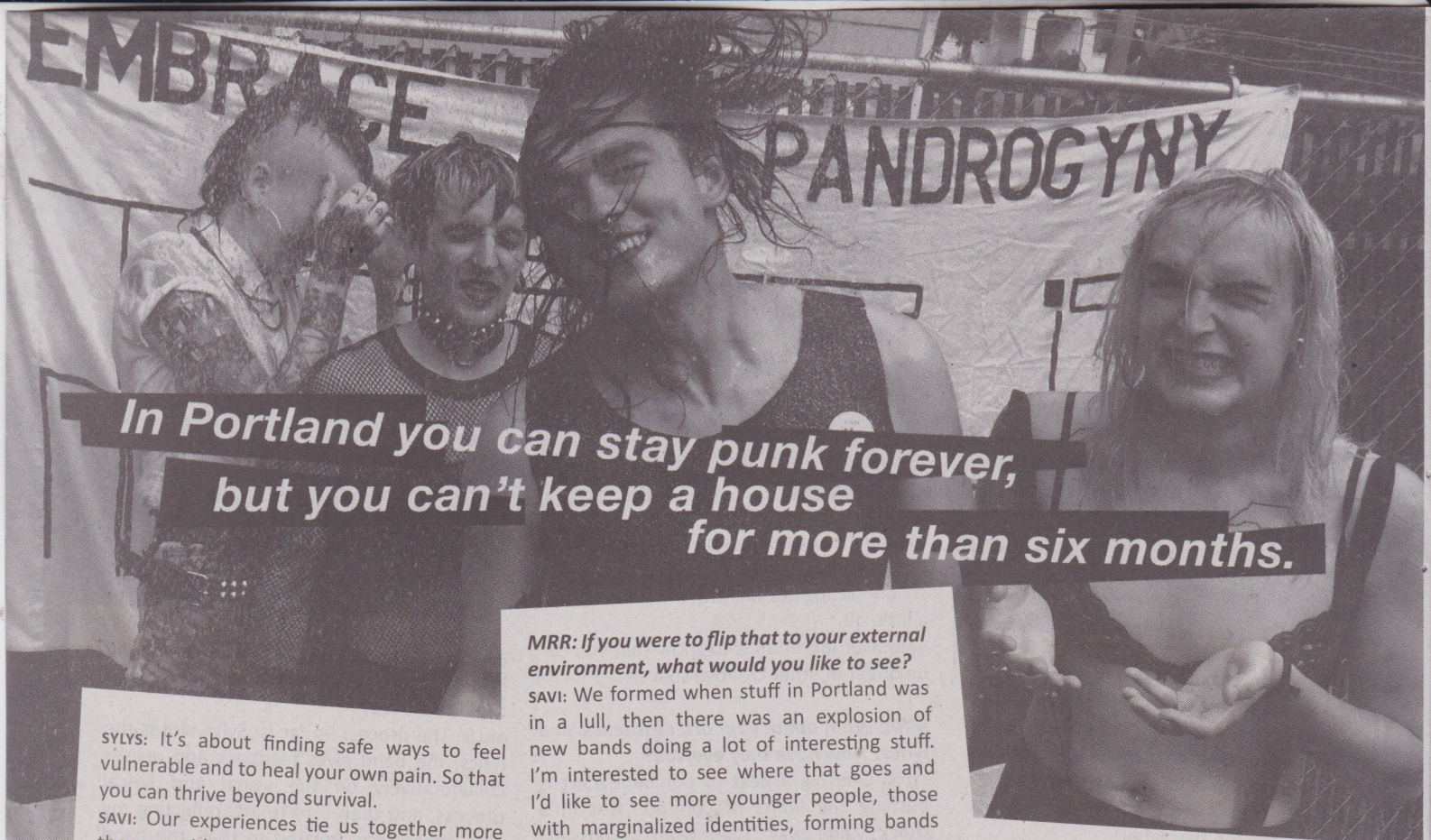
MRR: Do you feel things need to be proven visibly or verbally?

SYLYS: Both visibly and verbally. Because I think that American institutional culture wants us to quantify and commodify our experiences and our feelings. And rationalize them so we can be valid as human beings. And that makes me feel crazy.

GARY: The nature of our trauma is the aesthetic of our anger.

MRR: Wow. Often, with struggle, there is this seductive appeal of the Oppression Olympics, which comes from that economy of competition and needing to prove things.

BILLIE: We try to avoid that by speaking only from our own experience. The intention of our music is encouraging people to own their truth. One of my favorite lyrics is "Owning my truth, exposing my shame" in the song, "Cycles ov Abuse."



In Portland you can stay punk forever, but you can't keep a house for more than six months.

SYLYS: It's about finding safe ways to feel vulnerable and to heal your own pain. So that you can thrive beyond survival.

SAVI: Our experiences tie us together more than our identity. Those experiences build our affinity together. So the lyrics prioritize experiences rather than identity so that it's true to us while others listening can also put themselves inside and realize their own truth. It reaches out to other people, encourages them to build their own projects whatever they may be. Similar to what we did and how we formed this band.

MRR: As a project, what do you want to see?

BILLIE: It's hard to say. We want to write, record and tour more. We started Emasculator with no concrete plans or expectations, which proved to be very therapeutic and fun and engaging for all of us.

SAVI: I think we want to get weirder in general. The next stuff we are putting out will be more experimental, drawing from contemporary bands, and we also want to create utterly new ideas of our own. We definitely want to push the limits of what we are already.

GARY: I hate the word "musicianship," but as far as that goes, playing in this band has made us all push ourselves to play faster, harder, and better, on our own terms. And on top of that, it has really pushed us to dive deep into our creativity and pull out all the dark things, and things that make us feel good and bad and everything in between.

SYLYS: I think that I'm really excited about exploring new stuff because I'm really interested in human potential and possibility: What Is Possible? Exploring as much as possible inside and outside of yourself. It could be limitless, so it's cool to try to stretch stuff out.

MRR: If you were to flip that to your external environment, what would you like to see?

SAVI: We formed when stuff in Portland was in a lull, then there was an explosion of new bands doing a lot of interesting stuff. I'm interested to see where that goes and I'd like to see more younger people, those with marginalized identities, forming bands and projects, and see more of a unification. Across the country things are stratified with genre and identity pockets. Exploding those boundaries, having those completely diminished and having growth. Younger bands sharing the same space with more established long-term bands.

MRR: As someone who moved to Portland, there appears to be a rigid set of expectations in and around hardcore.

BILLIE: Mmmhmm. It's disconcerting. And almost discouraging. That's why I particularly enjoy this and other bands I'm in. Because we don't engage with that rigidity. Sometimes it makes things harder, but it also makes it more honest and fun.

SYLYS: In the last year especially, there have been a lot of bands breaking out into different types of genres. I'm sooooo excited to hear synth punk, different types of hardcore, different types of noise projects. It feels good that things are shifting.

GARY: I think Portland can sometimes feel splintered, with multiple scenes in the realm of punk. I feel in recent years, there has been more crossover. There's at least one raw punk show every other night, there's pop punk, there're weird synth bands. After so many venues and so many houses have closed in Portland, the infoshop that opened in November in North Portland (Anarres) has been hosting shows as well as Blackwater's new location. There's been a big variety of bands playing and a strong community supporting each other.

BILLIE: In Portland you can stay punk forever, but you can't keep a house for more than six months.

MRR: Last jibe: predictions? Future trends?

GARY: Old men are going to continuously bash punks for being fashionable, and fashion punks are going to continue to look cute as hell [*laughter*]

BILLIE: Nu-metal crust is comin' back. And twee black metal. And uh, I have a vision of power pop bands listening to Kim Wilde at 45 instead of 33, and crafting a sound from there (shoutout to Miles!).

SAVI: Poppers becoming no longer straightedge.

BILLIE: I see the boundaries of straightedge becoming broader. Weed and poppers are in.

SAVI: D-beat raw punk warriors will start listening to J-pop. Fake skinheads will start to listening to Rancid.

MRR: Shoutouts to new bands you like?

SAVI: Slouch, Allergy, Spetsnaz

SYLYS: Ointment

GARY: Tensor, Trivial Pursuit, and Hreinn

BILLIE: Humanmania from Baltimore, and the new lineup of Lotus Fucker

SAVI: Shoutout to Grady for recording our tape in between listening to hair metal.

BILLIE: That's "Microphonic Meltdown." He records bands, and releases tapes.

emasculator.bandcamp.com

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By Harry Guenthner

Photos provided by Barrot Rendleman, William J. Johnson

The name Do Ya Hear We (DYHW, Chattanooga's punk fest) has a short and long version. The short version: it's from the John Carpenter movie The Thing. There's a part where Wilford Brimley's character warns another character to "Watch Clark, watch him close. Do you hear me?" Wilford's burgeoning lip whiskers muffle the warning just enough to create the fest title we so affectionately use today. That's enough to go on for now.

We live in a time of origin stories. People are looking for answers about where everything came from and why it came to be. Basically, everything was carried to us on the backs of everyone before us. Knowing about then is interesting but it doesn't fix what's happening now. Do Ya Hear We is about now and then.

Sure, There's Rules

Each year, bands that formed at least six months prior to the fest descend upon Chattanooga and aim to share sweaty hugs, DIY records and zines, and lukewarm beers. Chattanooga, TN is a place that, prior to taking a few chapters out of Richard Florida's gentrification manual, was a shithole, heavily-polluted river town full of laborers and losers. Not "losers" in the sense that the residents were not ambitious, but in the sense that the American dream sized them up and cropped them out of the picture that was envisioned for the future of the USA during the '70s, '80s, and most of the '90s.

Those losers had kids, and the kids had nothing better to do than drink, fight, and fuck…and do drugs. And learn how to play instruments really well. Actually, most of my friends from the disenfranchised Southern US spent less time doing the first four in that list, instead devoting much of their time to learning about and playing music.

A lack of real city life drove us all to our radios, televisions and instruments. Most importantly, it drove us to each other. Most folks who come to DYHW have friends there that they've known for at least five years—and that's being conservative. Many of them

SHELLSHAG

These two have been making appearances at DYHW since about 2007. They typically round off one of the nights by playing a wild set in the middle of Sluggo's barroom floor—everyone crowds around them and sings along to their songs, 50 Million songs, and some of the best covers you'll ever hear. They've been known to team up with local musicians who have played on studio recordings with them and even play some old favorites by local bands.

MRR: You folks typically take the weekend of DYHW off to attend and play, right?

Shellshag: Yes, happily. They usually have the greatest bands the whole weekend and we love to hang out and party with our friends down there for as long as possible.

MRR: Why do you always make it to DYHW?

Shellshag: It is the best fest, for real! The best bands play. Also we have a long history in Chattanooga. We were self-exiled many years ago after pretty much ruining our buddy, Greg Harvester's birthday.* Because all the people there seem to understand and forgive any mistakes you sometimes make, we fit right in and relish in being allowed to be ourselves. It may seem funny, but these people, who we met back in 1998 or so, ended up being our life-long friends. We feel very fortunate to have met such kindred spirits.

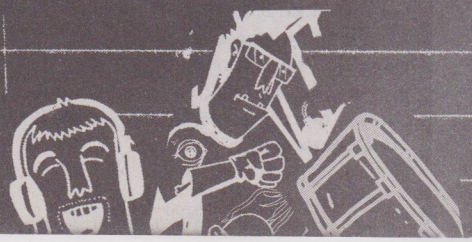
MRR: Do you have a favorite year or experience from any of the DYHW fests you've been to?

Shellshag: At this point I'd have to say 2015. Got to play every day, including an acoustic show, and Jen got to drum on a song with Sexy! Vacation (the band) was there—we recorded our latest record with them—so we were thrilled, of course, to see them again and hang in Chattanooga with the rest of our extended family.

MRR: As a touring band, do you typically get paid at DYHW decently enough to make it worth the stop?

Shellshag: Yes. I think they try real hard to take care of all the bands, from food to finding places for them to sleep, drinks and money.

*For you curious folks, the event they speak of is when the legendary (sort of) local venue, IBP (which stood for Instant Beer Pleasure), stopped allowing the punk community to book any more shows (ever!) after the 50 Million show went south and the place got trashed. It took a while for Chattanooga punks to find a new place to host shows, but in the end, everything turned out fine. As our little buddy Ru (Chattanooga local child prodigy) once said, "We do what we like." And that's really all that needs to be said about it. Chattanooga and Shellshag, forever!



grew up together. So once a year, we party, commiserate over the loss of dear friends, and hang out—the fest functions as a family reunion of sorts—and if you come as a newbie one year, you come as a family member the next.

History Repeats Itself

Nearly every year at DYHW, there are bands reuniting for the event. And it's never a last minute thing, where everyone in an old band happens to be in the same room and drunkenly decide to play a few songs at the end of the night.

These bands spend days and weeks preparing, hoping to give old friends a much needed rock refresher and give newcomers a taste of what it was like to see these bands shed tears and blood over their instruments while consuming vast amounts of alcohol. Many are repeat offenders. Bands such as Spawn Sacs, the Morons, and Jack Palance Band have pulled it together many times for DYHW. Other times you'll get a random treat and all the members of Darvis Brown and the Smoke Asses or Crackrock come together one more time. Miami, Florida's Funyuns (the origin of Onion Flavored Rings) performed one year; Los Canadians, Ye Old Buttfuck, Forced Vengeance and Rice Harvester have all turned up in past years and played amazing sets that would make you think they never broke up.

I know it sounds like a treat for the locals only, but many out-of-towners know these bands and have worn out the grooves of the one 7" album the band put out in the '90s. As these reunion bands play you'll notice, while in the throes of screaming the lyrics to your favorite song, that everyone around you is singing along too—and all you can think is, "How? How, before the Internet, did anybody hear of this shit?"

When you're in the midst of a joyous, drunken sing-along with 250 people, some of whom you've never met, you feel the presence of everyone there and a sense of kinship that may or may not immediately vanish once the last chord fades and the drums are broken down. No matter how you feel afterward, that moment resonates with you, whether or not you're too ashamed to admit it to anyone. And folks and friends at DYHW all know the feeling, because they all go to the same shows you do all weekend long.

One Show at a Time

Do Ya Hear We, regardless of the size, doesn't operate in multiple venues simultaneously. All shows take place at one space each night. For a while, those venues changed every year—a rundown office space, an old assembly hall with a swimming pool, even outside under a bridge. A few local venues have always been willing to accommodate: J.J.'s Bohemia on MLK Blvd has hosted at least one night of DYHW for many years in a row; Ziggy's Underground typically offers to host a night.

There have been other venues that have since closed, but what really changed (and saved—in a way) DYHW for the past five years or so is Sluggo's North Vegetarian Café. Terry Johnson and Ashley Krey moved to Chattanooga and lifted much of the burden of finding venues to host the fest off of the organizers, first by hosting a night of DYHW upstairs in the dining room of their restaurant, then opening a downstairs bar and hosting two nights of fest every year since.

Sluggo's makes sense for DYHW for many reasons. It's an all-vegan restaurant that offers late night snacks during Fest—saving lives, for real. The owners have been involved with DIY punk for years—Terry Johnson in the long-running jangly-hillbilly-folk punk band, This Bike is a Pipe Bomb, and Ashley Krey, a California transplant who headed up great bands like Sexy and Future Virgins. They moved to Chattanooga, gave their friends jobs, and played a huge part in maintaining (and quite possibly saving) the scene. Not to mention Terry heads up the Southern branch of Plan-It-X, putting out local bands' records.

History Part 2

I have been going to shows in Chattanooga since the '90s. Ever since I can remember, touring bands have revered Chattanooga as the best place to play on tour—not because you get paid much, or the shows are giant but because people dance at shows and aren't shy about showing their excitement. Sometimes they'll know your songs and sing along; then they will hug you and send you on your way when it's time to go. They make you feel special, even though you're not and because you are (meant as nicely and logically as possible). Ordinary people don't love and live for music like we do—that's odd and it makes you (us) extraordinary.

Ashley Krey

Ashley is one half of the team that hosts DYHW each year at Sluggo's North Vegetarian Cafe. He's been involved with many bands and is a phenomenal songwriter.

MRR: What makes DYHW special for you?

Bands bring their best to the Fest, not because they're competing or trying to show off, but because they want to play as good as they can for all of their friends there watching. Returning bands sometimes try to do something special sometimes, it's great.

MRR: Is it a draining experience each year?

Krey: Hosting the Fest is a lot of work. We're always dealing with a broken A/C in 100 degree summer heat...There're typically more technical difficulties than I care for. But by the end of the weekend, you're content. Exhausted, but content and glad you did it—again.

TUCKER McGUINESS

Tucker has been helping to run and organize the Fest since its inception (almost). After hearing that Jack Palance Band (JPB) were going to reunite for a show in Chattanooga (around 2005 or so), he and a few friends made the horrendous drive down to Chattanooga from Brooklyn, NY to see a band whose records had been on constant rotation on their turntables and whom they'd heard put on an amazing show. After experiencing a JPB show firsthand—and making tons of great friends—he and his partner, Liz Spak decided to move down to Chattanooga and get involved with the Fest and make it what it is today. Started by former Morons guitarist/singer, Bryan Hensley, and a few others, DYHW became a concerted effort, wrangled and executed by Liz and Tucker, Heather Lacey, Ron Cobra, Scott Balch, and an array of handy folks like Anthony Bishop and Chris Conn. All of these people have been/are in bands and have been on tour. So they utilize that experience to try to make shit super tight for the bands and everyone in attendance. Since the beginning, various folks have stepped in and out of the DYHW panel.

MRR: Do you have a favorite year of DYHW?

Tucker: This year, honestly! There were zero problems, we got lucky with abnormally cool weather that weekend, and everything ran smoothly. It was a little bittersweet because some folks are moving awaywho have been involved with playing the Fest every year since it started, but that's how it's always been—people leave, some return...

MRR: What sort of experience did you have with booking and running shows prior to DYHW?

Tucker: In New York, Liz and I volunteered at ABC No Rio. We booked bands and made sure they got some money. Of course we also booked shows at our house in New York.

I should mention here that Heather Lacey, and everyone on that list of organizers, has been booking shows in and around the South for longer than they probably care to remember.

MRR: How do you get around trying to book more well-known bands with guarantees?

Tucker: Probably one of the best aspects of DYHW is our lineup. Throughout the years we've made friends with tons of people and bands all over the place, so the lineup each year is typically eighteen locals and twenty non-local bands. Of the eighteen locals we try to arrange for certain local bands that don't normally get out of town because their members are tied down to families, jobs, or just can't afford to go on a tour. So every year you'll see bands you just can't see anywhere else like Future Virgins, Hidden Spots, etc.

Shellshag also typically makes an appearance at DYHW—they tour constantly, of course, but you'll definitely see them at DYHW—and it will be like no other Shellshag show!

Eric Nelson

This guy has been in some of the best bands to come out of the South in the past 25 years! With groups like Jack Palance Band, Driller Killers, Hidden Spots, Forced Vengeance, etc., he screams lyrics that smack you out of your comfortable complacency and make you consider, if just for 45 seconds, "What the fuck is wrong with the world and what can I do about it?" He'll rip your heart out with songs about friends and family passing on, and he'll build you back up by letting you know that you're important enough and you matter—always. Doesn't sound very "punk" right? Well, that's exactly what my punk rocker friend Jay said about Eric's songs years ago—when Jay was too punk for anything. Now Jay lives in Italy trying to form a Baptist church and preaching about how women are inferior to men and shouldn't be allowed to preach "the word." So, be careful how you respond to good vibes.

I bring Eric up because he really is one of the many reasons people come to DYHW each year. They want to hear him sing, they want to hang out and make him laugh and laugh with him. Mostly, they want to be there when Hidden Spots close out a night of Fest and Eric tells the crowd how amazing they are and how happy he is to see everyone. Because they know he means it. Chances are, you're not going to see this anywhere else—with very few exceptions.

Furthermore, if it weren't for Eric Nelson, who knows if DYHW would even be happening right now. There are numerous people who will attest to Eric's music getting them through some rough times. And he has inspired many people to start playing music.

But, at the bare minimum, the Fest certainly wouldn't have the name it does if not for Eric. There was a long span of time when Eric would say (mid-chuckle) "Do ya hear we" in response to nearly anything. He's the one who made several (dozen) people watch that short part of The Thing over and over again in his living room with his amazing wife, Amy.

In many ways, the phrase "do ya hear we" has taken on a meaning of its own because of Fest. Down here, in Eastern-Central Tennessee, they're screaming at the top of their lungs that every one of you out there matters and is beautiful. All they're asking is, "do ya fuckin' hear we?"

Song and dance are natural endeavors—humans have done it for as long as we have history to speak of as being human. Song cradles us through grief, lifts our spirits into joyous celebration, and inspires us to continue the fight (good or bad). I guess the most relevant aspect of DYHW is that this inherent, even classical, aspect of music plays out for three days late in June every year. If you've never been there to experience it, you're missing out on something great—something that appears to be fading or evolving away from our culture—and people at DYHW aren't willing to let it go. So long as they're still breathing, they're singing. Don't blow it!

doyahearwe.com

MRR: Anything special planned for next year, the tenth anniversary?

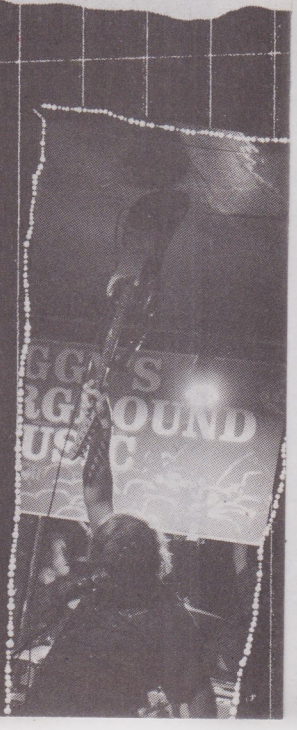
Tucker: We don't normally even discuss next year's Fest until after January. It's better that way because by then we have a decent idea which local bands are still active and whether or not they'll be willing to play. If a band hasn't been actively playing shows and practicing for at least six months prior to Fest, we don't book them. Not to be mean, but because we don't want empty slots at the last minute due to cancellations, which always tends to happen anyway.

MRR: Are there always reunion bands?

Tucker: I'd rather say there're usually reunion bands. Some years more than others. For instance, this year Sexy was booked to play and they were the only reunion band. Chris, their drummer, flaked at the last minute. In a scramble to ensure the show went on, Ashley and Billy teamed up with drummers Morgan Stickrod, Jen Shagawat, and Cole Champion and played as Sexy. It worked out and ended up totally ruling.

MRR: Yeah, that was great. Sort of christened the first night of Fest perfectly.

Tucker: So, in short, nothing planned for next year, but I'm sure it'll rule. Don't blow it!



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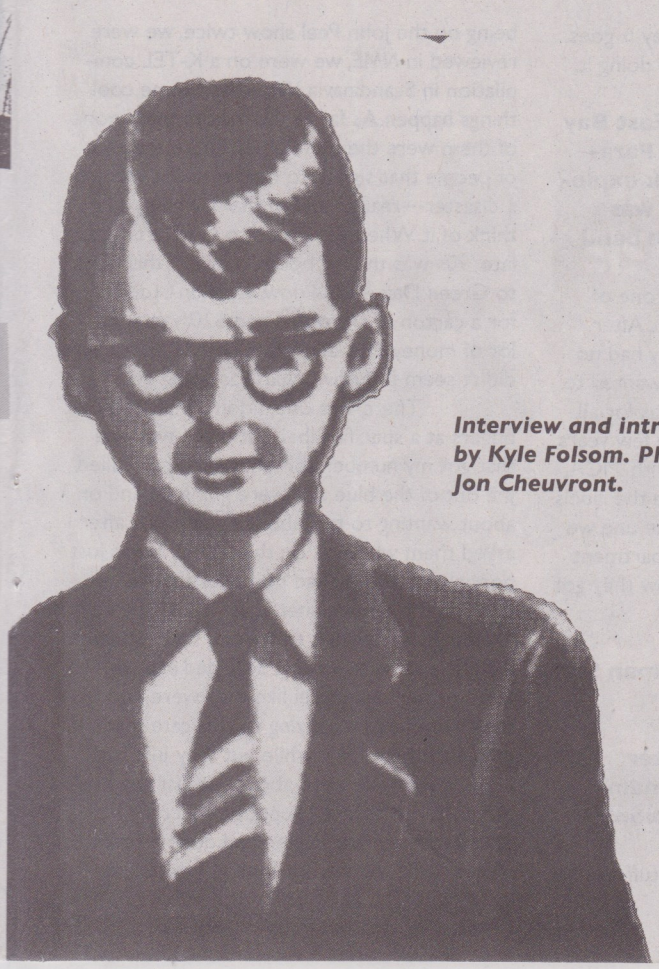
PARASITES

The Parasites have been playing melodic pop punk for almost thirty years. They formed in 1986 in New Jersey and relocated to Berkeley in 1991. Dave (AKA Nikki) Parasite is the sole remaining original member and is showing no signs of slowing down. The band most recently did a full East Coast/Midwest tour with Flamingo Nosebleed and their next LP will be released this year on Dave's own label, Kid Tested Records. This is their first ever MRR interview after nearly 30 years of being a band!



Interview and introduction by Kyle Folsom. Photos by Jon Cheuvront.

I know that you guys did that tour last summer and it sounds like you've been playing some shows here and there.

Summer 2012, Awesome Fest (in California) asked us to play, but we couldn't get out there to do it. [A year later] they got back in touch with me so we decided to book a tour to go out there. So we basically went away for three and a half weeks from Illinois straight down south through Texas, out to San Diego for Awesome Fest, up the coast through Gilman St, and basically back across Route 80 all the way to here in Chicago.

I hadn't been out there in a long time…some places, it seems that the scene has changed and people didn't know who we were; other places lots of people showed up that I knew. For the timespan, it was actually fine. We went with a band on my label, Kid Tested Records, called Flamingo Nosebleed, whose their album had just come out. We did another tour this past August, going straight from Chicago out to Boston down the whole coast around Florida, and then back from south up into the Midwest…just a couple shows less than the previous tour, but much less driving since the east coast has so many more cities on it. Flamingo Nosebleed did that tour with us again too.

So, who's all in the band now?

I'm on guitar and vocals, like always; the bass player is John Wabash, one of my roommates out here, and the guitar player is Charlie Crane. We're actually sharing the drummer of Flamingo Nosebleed… they got a new van, so we've all just been piling in there, sharing equipment and sharing the drummer, and it's the first van that doesn't have to be rented.

How's the next LP coming? Do you have a lot of new songs written?

I always have a bunch of things written down or saved to my phone or whatever. I actually have quite a lot of stuff and I have the whole idea of it all figured out. I'd rather spend more time on it and make it better. My plan is to make it both the darkest and catchiest one yet. Like if Ian Curtis joined the Descendents. Like a natural progression from *Solitary,* where in the last line I dropped the f-bomb for the first time ever.

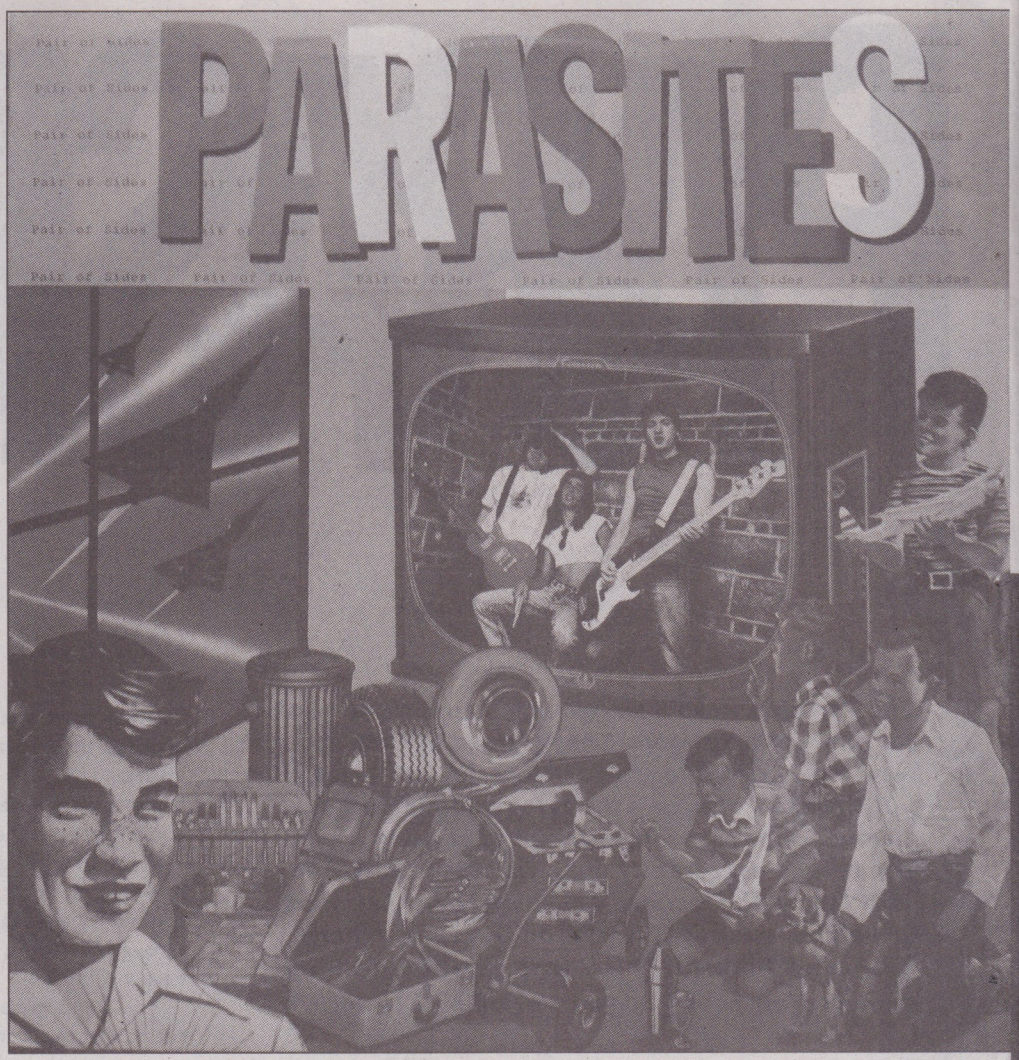
Do you feel like you still have the same passion for doing the band after so many years?

Honestly, not really. It's different. It's a lot different when you're 21

and you live at home and you don't have any bills and you can just run around and play all the time. At this point, I'm not saying it's not fun, but your first record is a big deal and for me, with albums and singles and comps, this next one coming out would be like my…88-th record or somewhere around there. It's not quite the same as the first time you do stuff. Which isn't to say I don't like it, but you know, I've done this a long time and you kind of get…With a movie that you think is the funniest movie ever, no matter how funny it is, after you watch it 10,000 times it's not quite as funny anymore. It's not to say I don't like it, it's just a whole different thing now. If my band was my kid, I could be a grandfather.

Yeah, it's been what now, like 25 years?
It's right around the same as Screeching Weasel…The first show we ever did was '86, but it was sort of a local hobby type band, we never toured, we really didn't have stuff out. It really didn't take off 'til '92 when I moved to California and we started really doing it… But if you want to go from when it started, that was '86 which was a little after Green Day, and a little before Screeching Weasel. So, 29 years… god, that sounds terrible but it's true.

I don't think it sounds terrible. There are only a handful of bands that have stayed together that long.
It's either admirable for sticking it out or, "Boy, you're dumb enough to do this for this long, really?" I don't know which way it goes, but as long as I like doing it, I'll keep doing it.

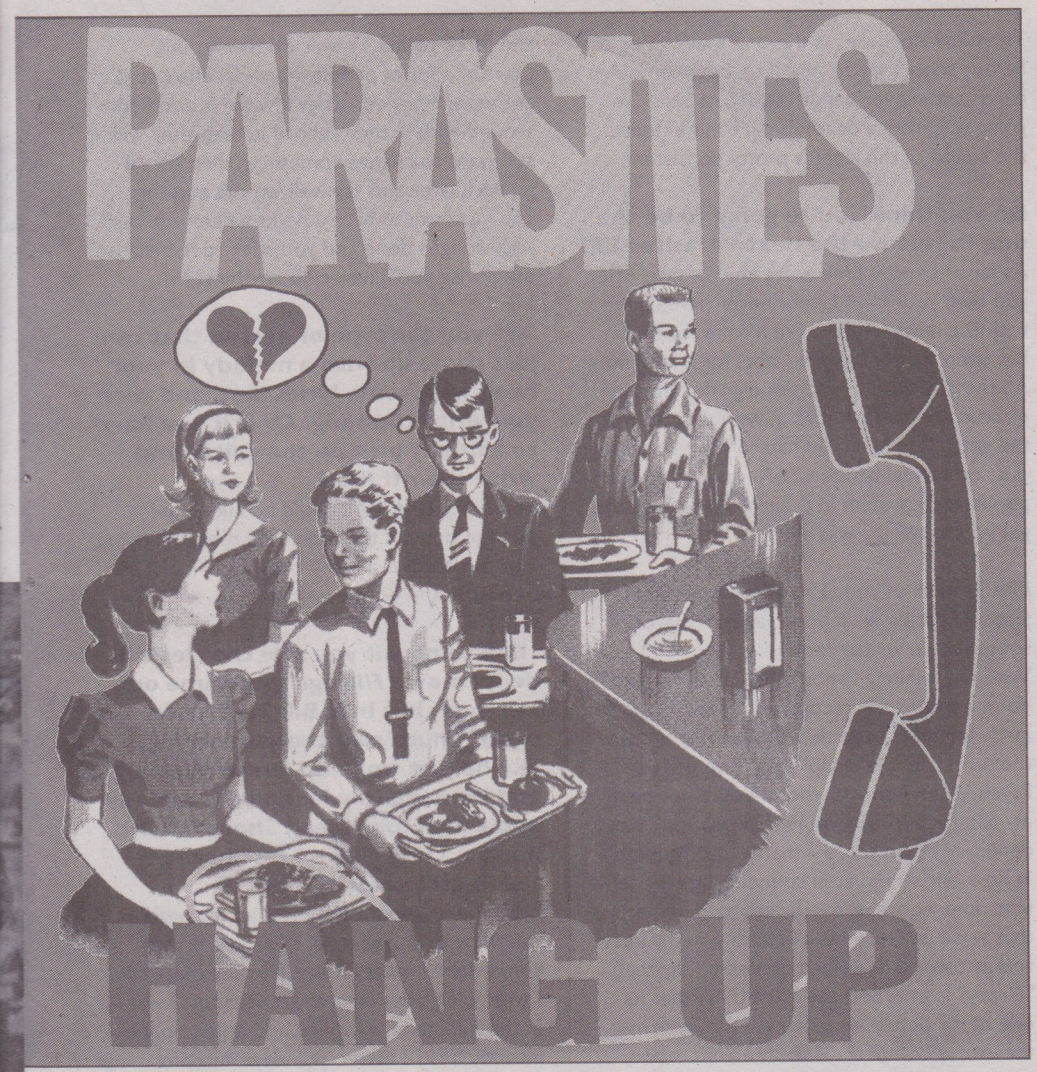


Since you were living in the East Bay during the early years of the Parasites and during the pop punk explosion of Green Day in '93/'94, was there ever any interest in the band from any bigger labels?
Yeah, quite a few. We thought about one of them seriously, but decided against it. After talking to them it was clear that they had no idea what we were about, and only wanted to snag something like Green Day. It was for all the wrong reasons. There was one a few years before that we would have signed with. MCA, Island, Qwest, and Roadrunner were the labels [that showed interest]. MCA was the one we would have done. I got calls at my apartment from reps and I still have no idea how they got my number.

Off the bathroom wall at Gilman St?
Yikes...No, Kyle.

Did you ever feel kind of bitter about it? Since that type of mainstream commercial success didn't happen for you?
I mean…We got to do some cool stuff, like being on the John Peel show twice, we were reviewed in *NME*, we were on a K-TEL compilation in Scandinavia. We've had some cool things happen. As far as the majors thing, none of them were the right labels. There are a lot of people that signed to majors and it was just a disaster—really most of them, when you think of it. When we signed to Go-Kart—the late '90s was the big boom for all of this due to Green Day—you know, we didn't [do it] for a carton of cigarettes and $20. We got a lot of money. The labels that contacted me just didn't seem to know what was going on.

There was one, I don't want to point fingers at a specific label, but there was one that got my number somehow, and just called me out of the blue and were going on and on about wanting to talk about signing us…after I asked them who was on their label, it was just horrible stuff. They had no bands that were even on the same planet as us. It just seemed like they just decided to try and find someone from the same town that sounded vaguely like Green Day. I didn't feel like they were into us, they were just into trying to replicate that. I talked to them for a while but they just had no idea what we were about…it just seemed dumb. In retrospect, I suppose we could have talked to them and signed and done a record to get some money. But look at Jawbreaker—



they signed a huge deal to Geffen and put out one record then disappeared. The percentage of times that works out for bands is really small compared to the percentage of bands that get the chance to do it.

Since you guys were tied into the Gilman scene in the early '90s, what was it like going back there now for you?
It was really weird… I mean we played there so, so many times. The whole time I was out in California, which was eight years, even though we toured a lot, we played more shows at Gilman than we did in some states with every tour put together. We played there all the time. It looks basically the same but it just was kind of a time warp when I walked in. Lucky for us, our show there was really, really good! I would have hated to have gone there and had it been a crap show on a weekend. For me it was kind of like coming back to play our usual place that we play all of the time—there just was a huge time between [this show and] the last one.

One thing I always noticed in your songs over the years was the lack of pronouns in the lyrics. Is this something intentional that you do as a songwriter, so the songs can be applicable to anyone's experiences?
Yeah, pretty much. No one should be excluded from identifying with a song.

I was thinking about it, and I can't think of anyone else who does that.
Buzzcocks. I kinda stole it from Pete Shelley. I actually told him when we toured with them, and he was surprised.

Did the band ever really break up at any point? After *Rat Ass Pie* came out in 1999, it wasn't until 2009 that you did another LP.
The anti-pop punk backlash of the 2000s made me slow down a bit, but now that it's back to being cool, we're here to ruin it all over again. We toured quite a bit back then, just mostly overseas.

Who are some of your other songwriting influences? I know that you guys just released a covers LP of pretty obscure power pop songs.
My songwriting reflects a world full of people that will not go out with me. That covers LP was a response to the Misfits' *Project 1950* and the Methadones' *20th Century Power Pop Riot*. I felt that the Misfits one was...well... pretty weak, and the Methadones was great, but I thought a lot of the songs were too well-known. So I chose '60s Beatles-y songs, and pretty much every one is obscure. Most people think I wrote a lot of them. Most people don't care one way or the other. I looked through music blogs for well over a year and picked out the best ones I found. The Haigs wrote and liked it, and that German band did too... Magic Herbs! The next album will be all originals, though.

Do you feel like it's harder for bands nowadays to have the possibility of just doing a band as your only source of income versus when you first started?
Absolutely. Back in the late '90s when you put out a record, people bought it. When you put out a record today, the next day it's on one hundred sites with free downloads. A lot of younger kids these days don't know music as something that you would actually buy—it's just something that's free. It's like now you make your money by going and touring, and you know that for every 100 people who've heard your record, three of them actually bought it, and that makes it tough to pay the bills for both you and the label.

Yeah I agree, it's kind of a tragedy, wherein everyone wants everything for free, I guess.
And, you know, that would be fine if recording studios and pressing plants followed suit, but unfortunately they don't. Vinyl is really big right

now, but it's also tied to the price of oil, and its super expensive. Everything is more expensive. I was at the store the other day and even a candy bar is now $1.29. Didn't those used to be like, 50 cents? And that doesn't even seem that long ago. But when you take everything you buy and make the prices so high, not only is it tough to be a band and get out there and tour, it's tough for people to buy all the records they want to buy. But, conveniently these illegal download sites have taken care of that. Trying to sell a record these days is like trying to sell air to people. Even giant bands even that used to sell like 10 million records, they now only sell half a million records…it's a huge difference.

Do you want to tell me a bit about your label and what bands you're putting out?

In 2006, the Go-Kart guy asked me to put together a pop punk comp, and that's the one called *Pop Punk's Not Dead*. I got a lot of good bands—the Copyrights were on it, the Queers, Unlovables, the Ergs, Travoltas, a few foreign bands… some Japanese bands. I put us on there, but I put it as the last track, because I thought it was obnoxious if I didn't do that. It was just bands from all over the world and a lot of the stuff was exclusive. Teenage Bottlerocket was the first song, they hadn't really hit yet. So, even with the whole downloading thing, the comp sold really well. I guess that was my unknown audition to them for starting a side-label, and we're still doing it now. We've got a CD coming out in a few months now; I think it will be release #19 or #20. I always find bands that I like and want to be on the label, and so far I've had lots of good ones…everything from older bands like Squirtgun and Sloppy Seconds, to newer bands like Flamingo Nosebleed and the Jetty Boys. The New Rochelles is the one that's going to be out soon. I try to mix it up between older bands and newer bands, but it's not like I'm going to throw a death metal band in there… the sound of the label is pretty consistent.

Do you think you're going to be the one to release the next Parasites LP?

As far as I know. I mean, it's kind of nice when you own your own label, I never have fights with the label guy, because it's me. Go-Kart has been a fairly big indie label for a long time. All the distribution and the digital stuff is in place, and ours just goes in with that. So from the get go, it's not like I had to start by putting out some local band's CD-Rs and try to get people to put them in their distro—from the get go, everything was all set.

I listen to all of your LPs all the time, and I was just wondering what your, say, top 5 favorite songs you've written are?

Well, I'm thinking I should be fair and try to do one from each record, but we have too many for that… the two that people know the most are "Hang Up" and "Ronnie is a Psycho," but honestly those would not be in my top five. "When I'm Here With You" would definitely be on there—that was a big jump in how our studio stuff sounded. It was the first time we went in and recorded something that was just really how I heard it in my head and just worked perfectly. I have to say that "Crazy" is one, because I just think that its one of my better songs… "All the Time in the World" off of the *Solitary* album is one, because for a million years I've been trying to write a Descendents song, even though I'm not the Descendents, and every time I've tried to write it, it never happened, and that time it finally did. Once you get past those three, I don't know, there's just so many of them…There're so many ways I could try to figure out what to include, so I would say those three are the ones I like the best. Funny enough, the thing with "Hang Up" is that I actually don't really like it. It wasn't quite finished when we went in to record it. All the music was done, and the night before the last day of the vocals session, I still was short one bridge and one verse. So I just stayed up super late 'til I could figure out what I was going to say, and then went in and did it the next day. So I guess I'm kind of biased against it, because if I'd had more time, or had it done in time, maybe it could have been a little better. But everyone seems to like it, I guess. That's the one that Lookout picked for our single…that song helped us a lot, so I guess I just have to figure that its fine the way it is.

Overall though, I don't really listen to us much. Like, right when I'm writing something or right when I record it, I'm listening to make sure everything is the way I want it to sound, but it's not like every Wednesday is "Parasites album day" and I sit on the couch and listen to me. I never do that. I think there're a lot of people in bands who's songs are never finished…they'll write it, and fiddle around with it, then record it, then they will still want to change something, then they'll go back later and say well we can add this… You just have to have a point where you say your song is done and you stick to it, because otherwise you'll never do anything.

Are you the type of person that can just come up with a melody in your head with some lyrics first, and then you write the song? Or is it you have to actually pick up the guitar and write the riff first?

Yeah, it's weird, like I could be taking the garbage out and then the little tune will come into my head or a few words, and I'll just go from that and do the whole thing.

I don't know if you saw the Descendents movie *Filmage* that came out last year, but in it Bill Stevenson pretty much said the same thing, like he just woke up in the morning and immediately he had the melody and words for "Clean Sheets" in his mind… I find that so fascinating.

Yeah, it just happens like that. I don't understand how, but off the top of my head I can think of an example. I was just driving somewhere, and it hit me. Two summers ago, I was going away for a short vacation. I was in the middle of nowhere, and it just popped into my head. I had to pull over and sing it into my phone so I didn't forget it…I have no idea where it came from. I never sit down and say, "OK, well it's Tuesday, so I'm going to sit down and write a song, and it has to be done by tonight." I don't think it would be as good… I'd rather not have to manufacture songs. To loop back around, the whole thing with major labels is, I can imagine back in the day that if we had signed with one those they would have been like "OK, what we want you to do, is to write a song like 'Longview.'" But what if I don't have any inspiration to do that?

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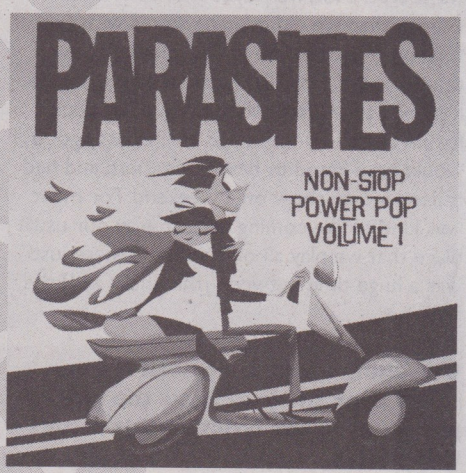

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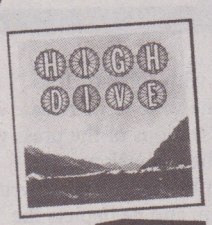

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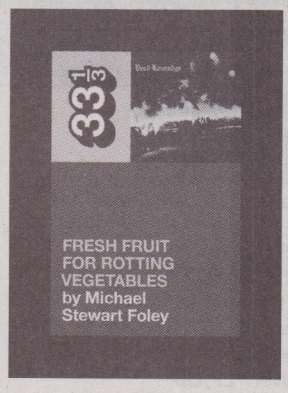


Dead Kennedys' Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables
Michael Stewart Foley
160 pages | $12.99
Bloomsbury

This is a great read—interesting, entertaining and thought provoking. Bringing together the emergence of the USA's most controversial punk band and the meltdown of San Francisco, the author demonstrates how a unique combination of musicians and events created the potent mix which birthed *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables*, the era's most visceral statement about the death knell of the American dream. The record, the band's name, it's artwork and lyrics all balanced humor and outrage in an attempt to "unglue people's minds" but did this in a very different way to any of its global contemporaries. After pouring over *The Feeding of the 5,000* a young Biafra asked, "What if Crass was funny?" This mind-set was the critical factor which delineates this record, its cultural shockwaves and the effectiveness of its ongoing legacy.

I chatted with the author last month when he appeared on the literary stage at Blackpool's 2015 Rebellion Festival and learned how all the book's claims are backed with rigorous research and detailed interview notes with the main actors in the Dead Kennedys' story. Foley was actually taking part in a discussion with British writer Alex Ogg, who wrote a book of the same title last year which was well reviewed by Mark Dober in MRR #380. With the arrival of these two books in such a short space of time, over thirty years after the record was originally released, we can finally say that the much needed debate about one of America's most interesting bands is finally underway.

What the band represented (and still do, long after they imploded in 1986 in the mire of the Tipper Gore inspired PMRC trial) and what they achieved in a short period of time is perhaps as relevant now as it was then. Many of their micro and macro targets such as social and economic inequality, corrupt leaders and politicians, cranks on the religious right, the moral majority, racist bigots and the "me-first" culture are now entrenched factors in the post-political malaise of the early 21st century. To that end the band tapped into something special and they were for all intents and purpose US punks' "early warning sign" of what was yet to come. As readers of this genre will be aware, there is a gathering profusion of books on nearly all the major early players from the Western punk scene (the Clash, the Sex Pistols, the Ramones etc.) which surely makes others as well as myself, slightly dismayed as to why it has taken so long for a focus to finally laser in on a band that really tried to attack the music industry with every fiber of its being. The Dead Kennedys are a band that really promoted the DIY ethic. They have an exciting story which is firstly so much bigger than the music and secondly so much more interesting than the usually drab and pretty standard life-story material that other writers in the field often attempt to peddle as investigative journalism.

Foley sets out his premise early in the book with the bold statement "*Fresh Fruit* was the most important, articulate, and accessible document of dissent to come from American youth in an age when it is generally assumed American youth had given up." Whether or not you agree, Foley's rigorous research and attention to detail offers a pretty compelling case. By mining and exhuming much of the social and political madness that surrounded SF at the time (the so called "decade of hate") Foley gives us a variety of interesting pathways into the mind-set that produced such a darkly humorous album with titles such as "I Kill Children" and "Let's Lynch The Landlord." At the time of its release *Fresh Fruit* received a lot of negative publicity from sections of the press which misread its barbed political commentary for cheap shock tactics.

The author is a historian by trade, having written about American political activism and Vietnam, and he depicts the "protest ethic" within the Dead Kennedys' first album as a continuation of the tactics and approach which had once flourished amongst the Yuppies, yet fizzled out with the advent of the "me" generation. Whilst this legacy certainly holds water politically, if anything this book also reveals that using this record as a statement of their intent, Dead Kennedys used music as a vehicle to "complain creatively" and to take their protest further than any of their predecessors, contemporaries or successors to date....and that is what delineates this record as a unique offering worthy of inclusion in this series. The book, similar to Ogg's offering, gives a real sense of where each of the individual band members (excepting Bruce Slesinger who declined to be interviewed) and the key personnel in the band's wider ecology (Geza X, Winston Smith) were coming from, in terms of their collective mind-set and how they all contributed to the songwriting process.

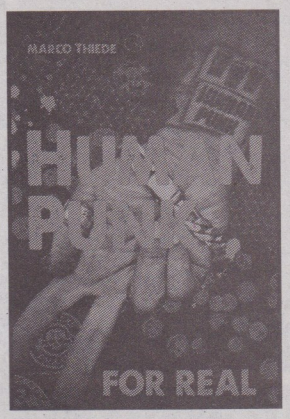
One of the most interesting aspects of the book is how Foley paints the very unusual socio-political landscape of that era of San Francisco's history. For a period of time the city was the location and connecting tissue between events as quirky and insane as the Jonestown mass suicide, Proposition 13, The Briggs Initiative, the murders of Mayor George Moscone and city supervisor and gay rights campaigner Harvey Milk, the subsequent Dan White "Twinkie-Defense," unusually high serial-killer activity, the killing of Edward Kennedy and the assassination attempt on President Ford (1975) along with the Patty Hearst and the Symbionese Liberation Front stories. This list could go on and on, but this tormenting sample reveals that there was madness in the city, and to some extent Foley believes punk rock offered "solidarity in the wreckage."

He also weaves this flurry of chaos into San Francisco's historical role within the counter-culture of the late sixties and the legacy of DIY that remains important to this day. In many ways the city politicized punk and Foley quotes Brad Lapin, editor of *Damage* magazine, who claims SF was "unquestionably, the most self-consciously political punk scene" in the United States, so much so it could perhaps even be regarded as "hysterically" so. He cites examples of the SF punk scene supporting striking workers all over the US and protesting about local matters such as specific gay rights issues and rent increases as evidence of this activism.

As a self-confessed long-time advocate of the band's music) although I must admit this release is actually one of my least favorite Dead Kennedys records) I do think the message of *Fresh Fruit* still resonates and is highly relevant for today. For fans of Dead Kennedys and / or people with an interest in countercultural politics of the USA (particularly San Francisco) during the late '70s / early '80s this is a must read. One key component that Foley teases out of this narrative is that when this album was conceived, written and produced, both the political left and political right were well defined and easy to identify as satirical targets. But rather than going after the easy targets their lyricist and chief master-mind Jello Biafra actually reserved his most pointed satire for those who were positioned in the middle ground, in essence those favoring complacency, who just fail to act or think. Or as Biafra more eloquently described it, those sleepwalkers paving the way for a "one-way ticket to apathy and fascism." Maybe his unique methodology of "creative complaining" was a well-chosen route and indeed quite prophetic, as this much vaunted "middle ground" now enchants the policy wonks, who see winning the hearts and "minds" of these imaginary centrists as the best way of winning elections. No wonder Western politics has become so empty, professionalized and boring. Surely

a little bit of creativity and theater would not go amiss, because as the now ship-wrecked American Dream keeps reminding us…"there's always room for Jello!"

— Andy Higgins



Human Punk For Real
by Marco Thiede
Regent Press
136 pgs | $19.77
regentpress.net

I lost this book shortly after receiving it and honestly, my life is better off because of it. *Human Punk For Real* is the autobiography of an unknown punk named Marco Thiede who was born and raised in Bremen, Germany. Marco and his childhood friends were lucky enough to be alive during 1977—the year that punk broke. As teens who needed an outlet for all the terrorism that was happening in their country, they quickly adapted to the rebellious subculture by dying their hair punky colors, poking holes in their skin, and even fighting and kicking out Nazi skins from the shows they regularly attended. The book has several color photos of Marco and his friends at various parties and shows, all with spiked hair and adopted names, like Vicious and Squirrel, that help paint the picture of what it was like in Marco's world back in the late '70s. The photos reminded me of ones I've seen from 924 Gilman during the club's heyday and are probably the highlight of the book. Unfortunately, the writing is terrible, repetitive and yes, *unreadable* and I blame Regent Press for being so careless with Marco's story.

No one edited this book. The sentence structures are an eye-sore due to the fact that some sentences are highlighted in bold for no apparent reason and there are obnoxious seven dot ellipsis littered throughout the book, which made Marco's thoughts read like one long, drunken rant. A regular ellipsis (yes, I had to look up the term) has three dots. Why would Regent Press release this book into the world without cutting out all the unnecessary grammar mistakes and incoherent thoughts? Maybe Marco wanted it that way. Maybe that's really punk.

My other problem, and probably the reason why I "accidentally" lost this book, is the fact that Marco includes every single detail of every party that he's ever been to and he ends up sounding like a broken record. He even includes a mundane trip to the liquor store with greater detail than the meeting of his third wife, Sarah (who is half his age—and what happened to the other two wives?). But I diGreSs. The entire gimmick of Marco being alive in 1977 and re-telling his hazy stories made me think of Hot Topic and Warped Tour, two entities that are now a commodification and parody of punk, just like the book is, with its $19.77 price tag and the hilarious picture of Marco on the back cover wearing a t-shirt that reads "SPENT ALL DAY IN THE FUCKIN' PUB."

Had this book been printed as a compilation of zines or fliers from Marco's glory days, *Human Punk For Real* would have been more of a treasure to me. Instead, this book is here to remind us why we must document and capture what's happening now in our little punk universes before we become old, washed-up geezers who are trying to re-tell and re-sell our stories after an entire *lifetime* spent at the fuckin' pub.

— Vanessa X

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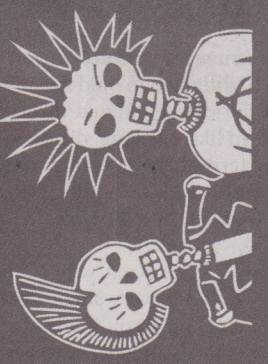

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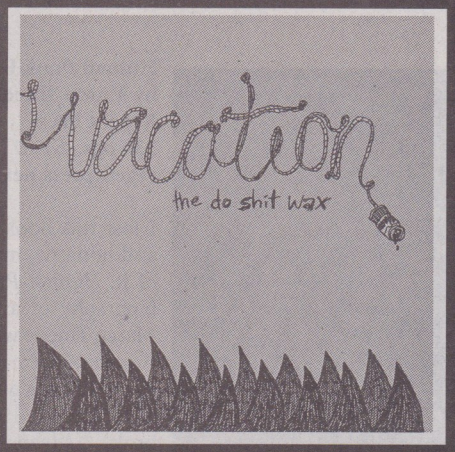

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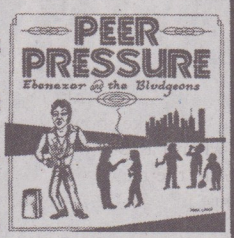

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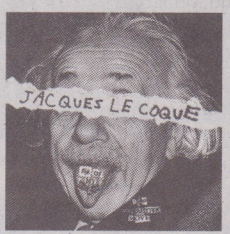

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BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

INCENDIARY DEVICE

You know it is an atypical month when I see three punk documentaries about bands that I like that are also all good. Since that never happens I have to resist to the urge to compare them. There are three levels of music documentary represented.

First, we have **The Dicks From Texas**. It is the punkest of the documentaries. It is made scrappily. People are interviewed in bars where fellow patrons are talking loudly in the background. Subtitles are occasionally used when the background noise drowns out the interviewee. The result might be difficult for your average viewer to handle. For me it has the right feel for a punk film.

The Dicks From Texas gets all the band documentary things right. This is a film for people who like the band or are interested in the band. They do not make any attempt to introduce punk to the average person. Everyone interviewed was there at the time. Even documentary stalwarts Henry Rollins and Ian MacKaye were there and their insights are kept brief. There is a good amount of footage from the '80s. Reunion footage doesn't appear until the end of the film and is kept short. Plus they save the archival performance of the Dicks' most well-known song for the end of the film.

The Dicks started when singer Gary Floyd returned to Austin, TX after seeing the Sex Pistols in San Francisco. He started claiming he had a band called the Dicks. This fad was known as poster bands. Fliers were made with fake shows and non-existent groups. The Dicks soon became a reality when bassist Buxf Parrott and guitarist Glen Taylor joined up with Floyd to form the band. All they needed was a drummer who they found in Pat Deason just in time to play the Punk Prom with the Big Boys.

The Dicks From Texas follows the evolution of the Dicks from Floyd as a local celebrity through band formation to punk legend. A funny story is told by one guy who went to a Lou Reed show to be inspired, just as he was getting into punk. Reed didn't inspire, but noticing Floyd walking through the crowd did. Everyone has a story to tell of those early days of Austin punk. It seems like a small town punk scene. Although there most likely had to be some rivalry, it has all been passed over for the good stuff.

David Yow comments that "it never occurred to me before seeing the Dicks that being afraid of the band could be a cool idea." It seems strange in 2015 to relate to a time when being a punk was not widely accepted. People were afraid and hated you simply for the way you looked. Seeing Gary Floyd looking intimidating in a mohawk and eye makeup reminds me of my own traumas dealing with men who would beat me up because they didn't like how I looked. Of course, that didn't stop me. I assume it didn't stop the Austin punks either.

The Dicks From Texas breaks one major punk documentary stereotype in that the majority of the people interviewed for the film are women. I have never seen this many women in a punk doc before. Finally a dose of reality. There were/are many females involved in punk even if the documentarians tend to make it look like this wasn't the case.

For all the Bay Area readers, **The Dicks From Texas** will be screening at The Eagle Tavern on October 22nd. It is also playing in other cities. Go see it. (thedicksfromtexas.com)

At the other end of the spectrum is **The Damned: Don't You Wish We Were Dead**. After almost the twentieth time hearing it I wanted to shout "We don't need to hear *New Rose* again!" Yet, the filmmaker thought we did. There is also too much new footage of the band. At almost two hours the film could use some more editing.

Those gripes aside **The Damned: Don't You Wish We Were Dead** manages to get the story. There are interviews with all four original members of the band: Dave Vanian, Captain Sensible, Rat Scabies, and Brian James. The result is the most seemingly thorough and honest account of a band's history. There are grudges, annoyances and anger. That always makes for an interesting film. In this case it also makes for a depressing one. There is too much honesty for my liking. Do we really need to know every personal detail of a band? While I wish I knew less, I am still fascinated by all the intricacies.

Captain Sensible takes us to the building where he worked cleaning bathrooms with Rat Scabies. He even takes us into one of them. While there he recounts how Scabies left work early to go to an audition for what would become the Damned. He told Sensible that they were also looking for a bass player if he was interested. He was and the rest as they say is history. The Damned were born. (damneddoc.com)

The last time I saw Captain Sensible, I had to ask when we were going to see the Johnny Moped documentary **Basically, Johnny Moped** in the Bay Area. I already knew I could buy a copy or download it (he reminded me of it, too), but there is something about the event of going to see a film in a theater with other excited people. That is how the screening of **The Damned: Don't You Wish We Were Dead** was. That conversation was months ago and though some vague promises were made about the Captain coming out to introduce a screening nothing came about of it. I got the download and all I can think is that would have been a great event. The film is that good. Even if you know nothing about Johnny Moped you will get caught up in it.

Basically, Johnny Moped is the story of a proto-punk band from Croydon, UK. It was formed by a bunch of kids who went to school together. They couldn't play and were proud of it. After all they were kids and having some fun. This was much to the chagrin of the other more serious local bands as well as their neighbors. That attitude set them up to be part of the British punk scene appearing at the Roxy in London. As Captain Sensible recalls, "The worse you were, the better people liked you in 1976. Isn't that great?"

Of course, the story is more complicated. The band started as kids. Some went off to college. The band broke up. The members joined other bands. During this time they learned to play. Then they reformed. Captain Sensible was a member until he got overcommitted with the Damned. Chrissie Hynde was involved in two versions of the band getting kicked out both times. As Roger Armstrong of Chiswick Records remarks, they were "part of the Croydon tradition of musically competent punks."

On top of it all is Paul Halford, the kid who would become Johnny Moped. He was named such because he really wanted to be a biker. He even got a "Hell's Angels Croydon" tattoo. He ended up driving a moped and thus semi-mockingly was dubbed Johnny Moped by his bandmates. He is a great front man. As such he is also eccentric and difficult to work with. The band flourished and suffered as a result.

Of the three films **Basically, Johnny Moped** is the most professional looking of the bunch. It was made by Captain Sensible's son Fred Burns. There is a good amount of footage of the band including some of their first show in a backyard. The story related is typical of the average band. A band enjoys a modicum of success, releases a few good records, breaks up, is forgotten and then reforms. Johnny Moped just released a new single on Damaged Goods which I keep hearing on the radio. Every time I do I always think what a great song it is. I have to remember to pick up a copy. (basicallyjohnnymoped.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy c/o Maximum Rocknroll, *PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. carolynkeddy.com*

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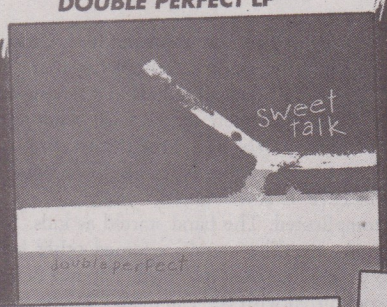

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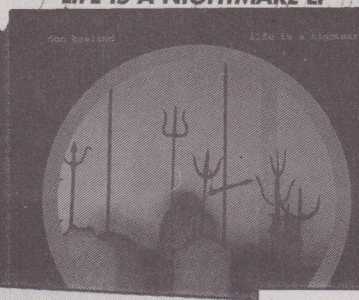

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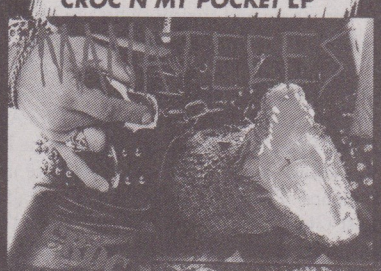

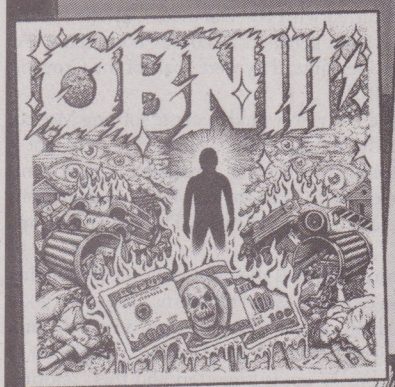

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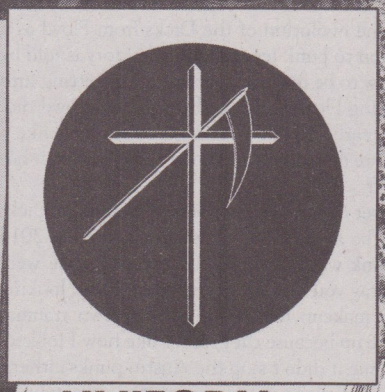

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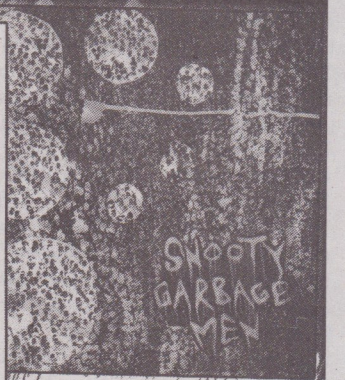

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(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RW) Ryan Wells
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(SZ) Shit Zoo
(WB) Will Blomquist
(WN) Robert Collins

AGE OF COLLAPSE – "Deteriorate" EP

San Diego's AGE OF COLLAPSE dish out two songs of IRON MAIDEN influenced melodic crust. I don't know if this is a trend or what, but a touch of MAIDEN is just what this otherwise worn-out style needs. The effects are electrifying. The delay ridden NEUROSIS intros give us that distant disorientation we all crave. This one's a winner in my book. (BA)
(Shove / XenemyX)

AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE – "Self Destroyer" LP

Lately I've noticed bands rehashing of a lot of the American hardcore from the '90s and early '00s (think US ROUGHNECKS or the FORGOTTEN). Maybe the Punk Core/GMM take on punk and Oi! never really went away, but it definitely hasn't been on my radar. In a way, it's kinda nice realizing this stuff is still out there. AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE is a fairly pleasant reminder of local openers on GBH shows when I was a kid. Musically, these Albany, NY heavy hitters remind me of Victory-era WARZONE, replete with catchy hooks, melodic backing vocals and a certain attachment to palm-muted breaks, without sacrificing the heavier breakdown parts. The vocalist could be in SHEER TERROR and I found myself wondering if live he also has the comedic chutzpah of Paul Bearer. This band could fit with recent Oi! bands in New York like 45 ADAPTERS or NO PAROLE. I hope to see them out on the West Coast soon. For fans of early morning egg sandwiches, Arizona Iced Tea, Red Wing Boots. (MW)
(Wax Deli)

ALL DOGS – "Kicking Every Day" LP

You know how every '90s alternative rock record ended with a slow, mellow, heartfelt song? Just like *In Utero* had "All Apologies" and the *Blue Album* had "Only In Dreams"? Well, this record is like a fuckin' entire album made out of those types of swan songs, although it sounds nothing like NIRVANA or WEEZER. These guys are more like a mix of KIMYA DAWSON and MAZZY STAR. There's one song that is an undisputable rager (the track "That Kind Of Girl"), but aside from that, this record lives and breathes as a bedroom record. A record ideal for the solace of time spent alone. Where you can freely display all your emotions, a record that encourages it. Maybe that makes this an emo record? But whatever label you give it, this is a solid and beautiful LP. Well worth tracking down for all the soft-hearted punks out there. (FS)
(Salinas)

ANGRY BRIGADE / WOUNDED KNEE – split EP

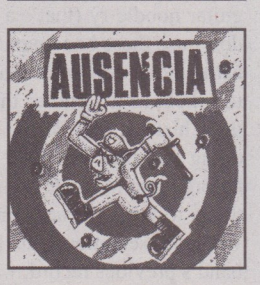
Blazing and heavy anarcho-crust is alive and well in Czech Republic. ANGRY BRIGADE does it fairly straightforward but with that galloping NOFX drumbeat, which is the only thing they have in common with those clowns. Tons of power and a cool sense of melody, even though it's mostly simple power chord riffs. WOUNDED KNEE are more metallic in nature and have more unpredictable arrangements. The vocals are more strained and desperate sounding. I dabbled in this metallic crusty stuff in my early twenties, and though it's not so much my choice these days, the Europeans still seem to do it best. Solid. (MA)
(Anarchist Black Cross / Emergency / Papagajuv Hlasatel / Phobia)

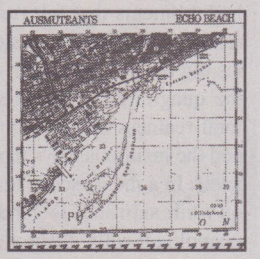
ARMISTICE / HOLOKAUST – split EP

Long-running LA peace punk veterans ARMISTICE return with two tracks of straightforward metallic punk that recalls early/mid '90s contemporaries like GYCENE MAX and APOCALYPSE. And of course, there's a direct line to the mighty ANTISECT. Their two tracks don't reinvent the wheel, but they're quite enjoyable, and it's great to hear a band that's been around forever and can still bring the goods in a pleasingly old-school style. Of course, I possess at least a bit of bias here since there was an ARMISTICE patch on my very first punk jacket (always had a soft spot for their Winnie the Pooh art, which is in full effect here). On the flip, HOLOKAUST deliver three tracks of oddly lifeless D-beat. None of these tracks really made much of an impression: no hooks, no memorable parts, nothing to write home about at all. (AU)
(Know)

AUSENCIA – "Sombra de Exilio" EP

By now I assume everyone's heard AUSENCIA, but that might just be a West Coast misperception. Featuring members of plenty of other recent LA bands, AUSENCIA bring the mid-paced Oi! with a notably French influence in the bouncy bass and persistent melody. They manage to walk a fine line, understating what are essentially very poppy songs, keeping them raw and urgent. Four remixed and mastered songs from last year's excellent demo. (SZ)
(Discos MMM / Verdugo)





AUSMUTEANTS — "Mates Rates/Echo Beach"

New waver accusations be damned, this is a pretty sick single. You can make some easy generic comparisons, maybe to the STRANGLERS or GARY NUMAN (whose work in particular becomes more and more evident as an urtext of contemporary Australian punk). "Mates Rates" though; there is some legit counterpoint going on between the vocal melody—it's a hook—and the synth lead. I'm sure that being bored young men, they sense not everyone is into it, and push back accordingly with more of the same. You probably already know what this sounds like. You hear music like this, see it taking off, and automatically start worry about hearing it in, say, a cell phone commercial. But AUSMUTEANTS have something petulant and antisocial enough to stick out like a sore thumb in any context. The B-side is a cover of "Echo Beach"—good luck licensing that. (EW)
(Hozac)

AYE NAKO – "The Blackest Eye" 12"

Brooklyn's AYE NAKO are back with their first release since their 2013 debut LP *Unleash Yourself*. I know that the band wanted to change their sound after that LP in an attempt to distance themselves from the "pop punk" label and even went as far as talking about releasing a hardcore EP. (I'd love to hear that since "Good Grief" from their demo is still one of my favorite songs of theirs). Instead of hardcore, they went in a completely different direction and delivered a lush, dense, guitar heavy, indie-shitstorm (that's good) that recalls some of the melodic sensibilities of the best SUPERCHUNK stuff and the guitar noodle-ry (that's a word) of TED LEO. I don't use these band names to imply that they're using these well-worn roadways as a blueprint. I use them as a signifier that AYE NAKO knows their history, they know what the fuck they're doing and they build on those who have come before them to create their own new beast that is theirs to tame (or not tame) as they see fit. The whole presentation feels like a step up from the band's previous record, which was no slouch but had moments that felt rushed or not quite fully-realized. There's no wasted space here. The lyrics dig deep into thoughts on sexual abuse, race, the quagmire of eternal self-doubt, the fucking total-realness of never-ending white supremacy and the insidious ways that it continues to sustain itself. In a music scene that cannot stop focusing on white skin and cis-gender bodies, this record is unapologetically queer, defiant and brown. Plus, it has a lot of sweet hooks. All of these things are important. All of these things are good. I can't wait to hear what they create next. (GH)
(Don Giovanni)

BABYLON – "Meltdown" EP

Four song EP of metallic, Motör-punkin, crust-ish-core madness from Seattle. Think of the '90s/early '00s Portland sound but leaning heavier to the Motör-beat side of the spectrum. Not at all what you'd expect from the neon cover art. (JU)
(self-released)

BABYSITTER / HAGFACE – split EP

I loved the HAGFACE demo, so I was psyched to see this in my review pile. The sound is pretty weird, maybe bad mastering? It's really quiet. HAGFACE sound truly insane. *Exorcist* vocals over spun-out BABES IN TOYLAND dirge prism grunged-out basement gnarl. They are a wild band. BABYSITTER play a yowling slow pigfuck number, one riff through the whole thing monotony style with some shredding guitar yawp at the end. Both of these bands have a '90s throwback quality, and I think if I hadn't dug the HAGFACE demo I would probably classify this as a "listen once and file away forever" record. (LG)
(Resurrection / Pleasence)

BARRERACUDAS – "Can Do Easy" LP

Everything about the song's first cut, "Jerk," reminds me of the QUEERS. The title, the sound, the vocals, the lyrics. Everything. I love the QUEERS, but the world doesn't need another QUEERS copycat band. Lucky for me (and you), once we move past the first song, that's not what we get. Take a base of solid rock'n'roll. Now imagine the most perfect combination of pop, punk, new wave, and bubblegum. Throw in a splash of glam. Then make it just a little bit better. When you hear this, you won't be surprised to learn that the band includes members of GENTLEMAN JESSE AND HIS MEN, BEAT BEAT BEAT and the HISS. No joke, this is Top Ten of 2015 material. (KK)
(Oops Baby)

BIKINI KILL – "Revolution Girl Style Now" LP

BIKINI KILL was my gateway band into DIY punk. I got into them when the first 12" came out, and then the year after they toured the UK with HUGGY BEAR, which was a life-changing experience for fourteen-year-old me. The fact that I have never heard these recordings at all is sort of funny to me now—I was such a maniac fan as a teen and I don't get why I didn't try and track this tape down! It's so fucking incredible! This beautifully done reissue has the songs from their infamous demo and you can clearly see why this recording enabled BIKINI KILL to tour extensively without a record, exactly how they got so much notice/press in the pre-internet age. It's simply incendiary. Like the Situationist and S.C.U.M. manifestos cut up with added teen girl diary fire. The music sounds eternal yet fresh, referencing early CA punk sounds—the AVENGERS, SIN 34, BLACK FLAG with added X-RAY SPEX. There are a million bands that pay homage to such possibilities and don't get *close* to what this band achieve. I mean, it seems almost pointless to write about BIKINI KILL sounds. They are pretty much the MINOR THREAT of the '90s, a band that transcended genre and had a global reach because of the true and total power and strength of their sound and message. They were a band that made girls and queers want to create their own version of the punk rock ideal, reaching lonely kids in isolated communities that maybe didn't know about DIY punk. They were charismatic and cool, and listening to this it's obvious why they were the catalyst for a new feminist punk reality. Kathleen's voice sounds absolutely incredible, a totally incandescent force of power and fire. This may be the best recording of it I have heard, one that fully demonstrates how this band burned through the world and took over hearts and minds…It just sounds so good! There are two songs that made it onto vinyl back then as compilation tracks (on *Give Me Back* and one of the Yo Yo comps—and maybe a KRS comp too?!), plus demo versions of some classic songs from the split LP and the first 12" and three insane unreleased songs, which either didn't fit on the demo tape, or were rejected for sounding unlike the other songs, depending on what you read. It's really cool listening to these songs in light of what BIKINI KILL became. They very much situate the band's sound in the context of the Pacific Northwest, providing an idea of them potentially being an almost FLIPPER-esque grunge group! The group love for BABES IN TOYLAND guitar tricks is real…At any rate it's clear this LP is a must have for all punks, so grab one and then start your own feminist punk action force. This record is an instruction sheet not a rulebook! Make your own. (LG)
(Bikini Kill)

BLACK ARMY JACKET – "222" LP

Late '90s New York heavy hardcore/pseudo-powerviolence stalwarts get the reissue treatment here, with flashy *Maniac Cop*-inspired (?) cover art that certainly catches the eye better than the original issue of this LP. This is the kind of super-hectic, all over the place hardcore that came to define the East Coast early '00s scene, for better or worse. Shades of everything from ENSIGN to BURNT BY THE SUN to DISCORDANCE AXIS are apparent from track to track. The drumming of a young(er) Dave Witte is definitely one of the highlights here. No matter what band he's playing in the dude is an absolute machine. The problem is that there's just too much going on—just when they settle into a cool groove or riff there's some annoying clean vocal part or unnecessary time change that kills the mood. This is definitely an artifact of its time, and if this era of hardcore speaks to you this is a must-have, but as far as reissues go this is definitely inessential. (AU)
(Brainscan)

BLACK LAGOON – "Séance" EP

BLACK LAGOON is a spooky German surf band. I got burnt out on surf in the '90s and have only recently started enjoying it again. Even still, the music needs to have a little something to set it apart from the pack. This is well-played, but not overly interesting. (CK)
(Killjoy)

BLIND SHAKE – "Live in San Francisco" LP

BLIND SHAKE have always struck me as an "Oz band" actually from the USA and better than 90% of the, frankly, half-baked stuff coming out of that continent these past five-odd years. They pull off a frantic, chunky punk-psych that has more evident muscle'n'sinew on display than most of the stuff plopping out on Bedroom Suck or RIP Society. Granted, you've got LOW LIFE, you've got LIVING EYES, there's DICK DIVER in a totally different vein, and a few great one-off side projects like BEEF JERK, but then BLIND SHAKE rates over most all of the rest. I'm laboring this comparison because BLIND SHAKE swing the *exact* sound that is supposed to be that scene's genetic trading card: pummeling catchiness. The only drawback here is this damn thing plays at 45rpm. Life's short, so eat your Wheaties and listen to the BLIND SHAKE. (RW)
(Castle Face)

THE BOLLWEEVILS – "Attack Scene" EP

This record starts out with a no holds barred BAD RELIGION rip-off. Blatant, unashamed, and maybe even kinda ballsy. The B-side is a braindead theme song. It's pretty damn dumb. I'm really glad this is only two songs. (DZ)
(Go Deaf / Underground Communiqué)

BROWN SPIDERS – "It's Something To Do/That Was Then This Is Now"

Two songs of blown-out, big muff noise rock from South Africa. This is repetitive music that is both minimal and huge at the same time, although the songs don't seem to say anything or really go anywhere: the point is volume, and they hammer that point home. (AM)
(Hozac)

BUCK BILOXI AND THE FUCKS – "Streets of Rage" LP

Everyone always calls BUCK BILOXI's songs "dumb" but I think what they mean to say is that he's a genius. Everything is dialed in just so, the perfect facsimile of a snotty, sloppy punk group, which, in reality, is the work of one man's mind. The fidelity on this LP is kicked up a notch from the usual but the instruments still sound like they are about to break and there are at least two false starts. Topics covered include how much rock'n'roll sucks and a dis track about *PORK* mag ("*you bought that costume with your credit card*")—the FUCKS are back, baby! No mold-breaking here—though it does seem like BUCK might have been spending some more time with his friend GIORGIO—but when the formula works, why fuck with it? My roommate says it sounds like the SCREAMERS doing the SPITS. I'm drinking a lukewarm beer leftover from my birthday party last night and I say it's the perfect soundtrack to that. Annotated map of Mississippi on the back is worth the cost of the record alone—one of the funniest things I've read this year. BUCK hates our present and the future doesn't look too great either. This world's a trashcan and we're just shitting in it. (GA)
(Hozac)

CADAVER EM TRANSE – "Camaleão" EP

Another highly anticipated gift from one of my favorite musical towns, São Paulo. Face melting, spaced out, affected post-punk. Synths give a lot of the songs—especially "Virus Tropical 15"—a cold wave edge. The last track "Pulsão de Morte" brings the record back to its punk roots. Such an amazing follow-up to their banger LP. Aesthetically pleasing and on point. Word on the street is that a bunch of the records were literally melted by acid, copies are limited, act fast. (AP)
(Iron Lung)

CANCERS – "Missed/Helpless"

Sometimes you're sad, and you always love pop songs, and there's a seven-inch that will grab you and get you dancing across your bedroom right away. CANCERS are some straight up slacker rock indie mopers who channeled a whole bunch of WHEN IN ROME or other glum synth wave bands but instead of keyboards they have guitars that sound somewhere between MY BLOODY VALENTINE and the JESUS LIZARD. I hate to oversell something but this record reaches out and wins on a lot of points. The drum machine sounds deep and machine-like, the guitars have both a satisfying warmth and a harsh digital bite, and the vocals are both PAVEMENT lazy and MBV hazy. The melodies are just perfect for swishy private dance parties. Put "Missed" on a tape between "The Promise" and "What You Want," or between "Here Comes Alice" and "Shoot The Singer (1 Sick Verse)" and it'll make sense. Both songs are great, and it comes on a super pretty single sided white/marble disc with a screen print on the B-side, so you can just throw it on your turntable and play it again and again while you write in your diary or whatever you do when you're alone (no judgments). Finally the flannel indie rockers are wearing eyeliner. (LP)
(Debt Offensive)

CAT PARTY / ETILO MAÑTALINI / SHADOWHOUSE / TERMINAL A – split EP

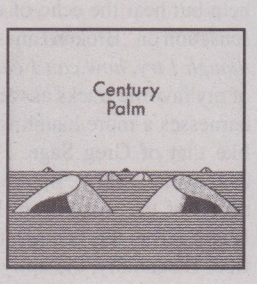
This four-way split between contemporary West Coast post-punkers is a damn fine mix of projects that fly under most folks' radars, mine included. Though their name is deceptively cutesy-bootsy, CAT PARTY stick to somber, minimal post-punk boosted by forlorn guitar melodies, while TERMINAL A bust out a sick '80s toy drum machine sound for the starkly danceable "Satellite." I liked SHADOWHOUSE when I caught them with ELEVEN POND last year and "Stay Away" is a strong entry here, nailing the sound and mood of classic '80s woe, although the songwriting felt a bit simplistic after a while. The only real letdown for me was ETILO MAÑTALINI's folksy dark pop, for which the only comparison I can think of is some lost collaboration between NINE INCH NAILS and LOU REED, at the creative peak of neither. It's not that it's bad—it just feels kind of bare compared to what surrounds it. (WB)
(Resurrection)

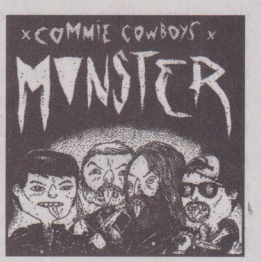
CENTURY PALM – "White Light/New Creation"

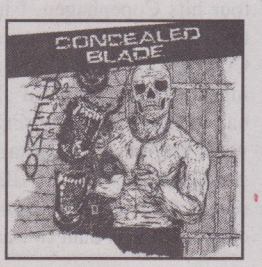
This is a refreshing blast of new wave. "White Light" cracks off like the ADVERTS with a touch of DEVO, while "New Creation" is heavier on the synths; there's still a DEVO influence but this time the filter is TUBEWAY ARMY or early HUMAN LEAGUE. It might not mean much to most *MRR* readers but this track also reminds me of the excellent Edinburgh group the MAGNIFICENTS. Great stuff. (AM)
(Symbolic Capital Industries)

CIB – "Thrash & Destroy" EP

This Italian fastcore EP has been out for two years, but just made its way here. The band had been around for a few years even then, and it shows in their catchy, quality songs. Sassari thrashers CIB have really mastered the mostly-blaz-







ing, stop/start, brief-breakdown, powerviolence/hardcore style. A layer of dark fuzz sits over the whole thing, accentuating the ugly. The guitars are rough and thick, and the drummer's sick. The cover is kinda generic, lyrics are in English, vinyl is lime-green, and there are 200 copies. This record's pretty fucking good, perfect for raging and finger-pointing, and there's an LP on the way. (JM)
(Big Sprites)

COLD BEAT – "Into the Air" LP

Yes. While their first LP had more detectable vestiges of the bass player/vocalist's former band GRASS WIDOW (this is not a complaint), *Into the Air* has evolved into its own thing altogether and I'm totally on board. More pensive and tempered with melancholy, this record also covers darker ground. The complexity takes many listens to begin to unravel, yet there are plenty of hooks to snag you in on the first spin. They've pumped up the electronic presence with ample synth and drum machine/pads on various tracks, skillfully managing to transmit that richness in the live sound as well. COLD BEAT, especially on this record, definitely evades neat classification but I'll take a cautious jab: French cold wave along the lines of GUERRE FROIDE and British post post-punk/pop, COCTEAU TWINS (and by association, THIS MORTAL COIL), the CURE, and even LUSH. I would say overall that they embrace pop music from a bygone era when commercial music was still embraceable – I can't help but hear the echo of a certain Swedish pop sensation on "Broken Lines" (*"when you're gone, though I try, how can I carry on?"*). This is one of my favorite tracks as well as "7 Sisters" which harnesses a more haunting and moody presence like that of Greg Sage. I'm also currently fixated on the synthy "Spirals" and when I miss the sound of the snare drum I just travel to "Am I Dust." All in all, this record is pretty much dud-free. Essentially, the aptly named COLD BEAT channels sounds from the damp and dark places that will have the last laugh when California's dwindling water resource eventually puts an end to the utopian aspirations of San Francisco's technocratic ruling class. Music from the future, about the present, built atop the wreckage of the future's past. So good; this thing will be in my regular rotation for a long time. (LT)
(Crime on the Moon)

COMMIE COWBOYS – "Monster" EP

Whenever the upcoming "Monster Mash"-themed MOTÖRHEAD / DWARVES / ZEKE tour hits Copenhagen, I imagine this band will be clamoring for an opening spot. COMMIE COWBOYS vomit all over the line between boring retro bar punk and shitty, one sheet-ready bar rock, all while farting out some ridiculous vocal crooning and guitar wanking all over the goddamn place. Do MAIDEN solos disqualify a record from review? None of these four songs clock in at less than two and a half minutes, and there wasn't a moment of this record where I didn't want to rip it off the turntable. The intro to the final song is like someone soloing over METALLICA's "Wherever I May Roam." Oof. (DG)
(Halshugga / Wargames)

CONCEALED BLADE – "Demo 2015" EP

Complete and utter menace and terror from the Braddock Bad Boys of CONCEALED BLADE on the vinyl version of their 2015 demo tape. Thick and burly, classic Northeastern US hardcore styles capped with plenty of hot whammy-bar action from this awesome band that appears to be fronted by the goddamn boogeyman, flawlessly projecting the rust belt morass with deadly accuracy. Members of HOUNDS OF HATE for those keeping score. (JU)
(Beach Impediment)

CONSTANT INSULT – 12"

This is a throwback sound that you don't hear too often. I'd call it punk, but it's got a lot of different elements. There's a rock'n'roll, almost Americana feel which, with the male/female vocals, bring LA's X to mind, without really sounding a ton like X. This might not be the greatest compliment for a punk record, but the songs are all very pretty. And with lyrics like "it's not good enough" and "it seems so far away" and "the things I feel, the things I need" it's definitely got an emo element. While it's maybe just a little too touchy/feely for me, it's well done enough that I can't help but like it. (KK)
(Let's Pretend)

ČORNA KRUŠWA – "=:-)" EP

This Berlin three-piece dropped a demo in 2012 and then there was silence. They have re-emerged with this EP and I hope there will be more to follow because this is really good stuff. The sound is somewhat familiar yet hard to pin down: dipping into '80s surfy post-punk territory with a jangly clean guitar sound and chorusy bass, some garagey elements and sick rock'n'roll licks, without forsaking the massive shadow of classic Deutschpunk. I also hear some ex-Yugoslavia punk along the lines of PARAF. It sounds dark and weird yet energetic, though without immediate access to the lyrics I'm just guessing on the tone. I realize I'm not really saying much here. I'll say this: it's good, interesting, and refreshing. Punk from Germany in German, you should get this. (LT)
(Broken Fingaz / Mamma Leone / Phantom)

CROWN COURT – "Ruck and Roll" EP

After the amazing *Trouble From London* demo, CROWN COURT return with three scorching ragers. More rock'n'roll than punk but fast enough to convince you otherwise, this record comes off like a rougher, rawer, ROSE TATTOO. What's special about it is that CROWN COURT forgoes the polished production of the bigger Oi! acts in what seems to be an effort to create a more traditional-sounding record, much like their contemporaries in RIXE. The opening track "3 Stretch" is definitely the standout and also the most developed. This is definitely a top ten record of 2015. Buy it. (MW)
(American Oi / Longshot / Rebellion)

DATA CONTROL – "Radiating" LP

This is actually my third exposure to Stockholm's DATA CONTROL, as I've also reviewed a couple tapes of theirs. They're melodic, upbeat and driving, but very unpredictable. Many of the vocal and guitar parts are very appealing, but I'm having a hard time focusing on this LP. The songs have weird structures and are often repetitive, which is disruptive to my pop-oriented taste. I suppose one could argue that's a good thing, and I'm not saying it isn't, I'm just not the type to listen to the weirder stuff. Does it sound like I don't like this? That's not what I'm trying to imply. I dig the faster songs, the vocal harmonies, the cool bass lines and melodic guitars, and how they all stack up to make a pretty unique result. Maybe it's just tough on the initial listen. I think there are probably lots of things to discover on this album that repeated listens would uncover. Even after that, I think it would still be a bit much to take in all at once. (MA)
(Farsot / DMC)

DEATHWANK / HADES MINING CO. – split EP

Another HADES MINING CO. split? I can't believe how many records these guys put out, especially given that they don't even really play songs. What they do is ANAL CUNT loving noise grind, with an emphasis on the noise part. Judging from their song titles (which are also the only lyrics) the theme of their side is licking various orifices. Stupid as usual, but I've heard worse from them. The theme of the DEATHWANK side is, you guessed it, wank. Their song titles are wankified versions of classic rock gems. They've got "Close to the Wank," "Hey Ho, Let's Wank," my personal favorite "I Can Feel it Wanking in the Air Tonight" and many more. As far as the music goes, they laydown some filthy full blast grindcore smashing. Nothing funny, just fucked up and nasty. It says they're from Scotland but after listening to this I don't know what to believe. (BA)
(Continuum / Noise Carnage)

DIOS HASTIO – "Fragmentario" EP

Man, this record is all over the place. For a band that bills itself as "crust grind" DIOS HASTIO lay the rock on pretty thick—there's more than a hint of melody in effect here. The A-side is pretty much a whiff, nothing really of note there but things pick up pretty good on the B-side, with a couple of harder hitting tracks. The whole enterprise is hampered by the super-weak bass sound and generally inconsistent songwriting that suffers from too many ideas being packed into each song. A band that's been around for over seventeen years should be capable of much more. (AU)
(Cuaderno Roto / Estridente / Impulso Ruin / La Otra Mejilla Nuca / Terminal World)

DIRECT HIT! – "More Of The Same" CD

I'm very down with this band on record and live. It's too bad that it's not the '90s, because these guys would have been right there with the similar sounding DILLINGER FOUR. This release, subtitled "Satanic Singles 2010-2014," is a collection of split release tracks as well as some cassette tracks that were re-recorded by the current lineup. These guys do a great job of shouting and singing in a reckless but melodic way. Their last album *Brainless God* was pretty great in the pop punk vein. This compilation is a good deal for us DIRECT HIT! late bloomers. (RL)
(Red Scare)

DIRECT YOUTH – "Get Away" EP

Yet another entry into the "European band playing '82-Boston styled hardcore via youth crew" book. Think SSD-esque riffs and songs for "the youth." Not bad, just see shit like this month after month after month. (JU)
(Halshugga)

DOUBTFIRE – CD

This is a great pop punk/power pop release! This band is a collaboration between Bil McRackin of the MCRACKINS and J Prozac of the PROZACS. I am long familiar with the history of Canada's the MCRACKINS. The East Coast's PROZACS, who were around in the 2000's, not so much. This sound reminds me a lot of the YUMS YUMS. There are also two choice cover tunes here: "Superpowered Superfly" which Michael Monroe did in the recent past and a great power pop version of Pete Townshend's "Let My Love Open The Door." A tad slick but well-produced with great harmonies and hooks galore—a year end top ten release for sure! (RL)
(Jerk Off)

DYSNEA BOYS / JIFFY MARKER – split EP

A nice little EP of '80s style beach punk. JIFFY MARKER's "Party Prison" and "(I Don't Want To Go To) Titty Beach" (really unfortunate song titles) bring the CLOROX GIRLS to the front of the dusty brain which gets the DESCENDENTS rolling around in there in turn. These songs are only as special as the Olympics they inspire and are none too memorable. DYSNEA BOYS's "Christian Bail" (another gold medal for song title creation) creeps and crawls across the finish line past the other tards with a violent guitar sound and melody not unlike the first OVERKILL EP. A good attempt and we all come out winners here. (RO)
(Debt Offensive)

THE EARLY STAGES – "Waiting Around For Rides" EP

On first listen, this didn't quite grab me as much as their excellent first EP. The title track meanders loosely around an admittedly catchy melodic figure, but doesn't really go anywhere. Luckily, the flip returns to previous form: "1992" is a bright, shambolic pop song worthy of anything the CLEAN put out, while "The New Sunrise" illuminates with licks reminiscent of TELEVISION and conversational vocals that remind me of post-YUMMY FUR act 1990s. I'm hoping the A-side will grow on me but this is worth it for the B-side alone (which I've listened to several times in a row). (AM)
(self-released)

EARTH GIRLS – "Someone I'd Like To Know" EP

On the label, it clearly states that this record runs at 33rpm, so I listened to it at that speed because I follow the rules. I thought "Whoa! This band is from Chicago *and they sound like SMOKING POPES?! Bold!"* But no, the record is supposed to run at 45rpm, so I switched it because I also like to break the rules. Instead of a mopey dude, you get a peppy woman and the songs are fast, ultra catchy bubblegum-style pop punk. The chord progressions use a secret minor chord every once in a while to blast this band out of the typical pop punk fare and closer to a realm of memorable powerhouses like the FASTBACKS and MARKED MEN. Anyone can write a song, but not everyone can give you a *feeling*…and in my world, that's way more important. Four songs. Nothing but melody throughout. If you're trying to write melodic punk in this day and age, take a cue from EARTH GIRLS and do it right. It sounds good on both speeds. (GH)
(Dirt Cult)

EBENEZER AND THE BLUDGEONS – "Peer Pressure" EP

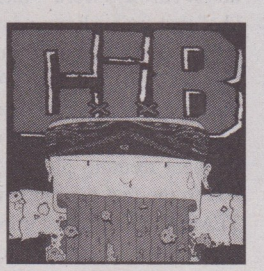
Looky what I win this month! No one coulda guessed these OG Baltimore KBD punkers were such the lyrical geniuses, but there's no doubt after any spin of this classique 1978 four-songer. I still remember first dropping the needle after coughing up some substantial lunch money in the '90s. Side A doesn't really do much bludgeoning, 'cept with the inescapable "*al-bi-no*" chorus of "Gerti," but the B-side is the absolute apex of bar band punk. *Ooh,* the controversy of "Weekend Nazi," only to be topped with the inexplicable punk paradox of "Oh! I Love This Weather" with one of the least climactic punk choruses ever. How can something that sucks so hard manage to also be the greatest thing ever?! I'm proud to be an American. (GB)
(Windian)

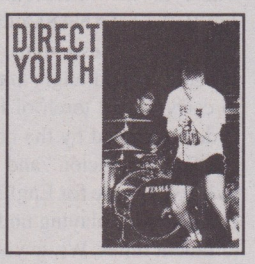
ELWAY – "Better Whenever" CD

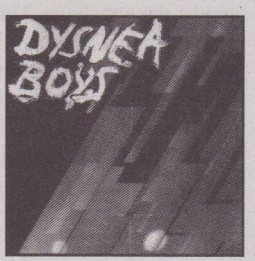
This quartet reminds me muchly of the WEAKERTHANS. Well, if the Canadians didn't shave for a few months, I suppose. They have that poppy, well-crafted tune sensibility, married with an aggressive melodic punk attack reminiscent of HOT WATER MUSIC. Ten tracks clocking in at that perfect length (you know, the three and a half minute single) definitely leave this listener wanting more. Their third full-length effort on Red Scare, and their best to date, which is saying a fair bit, believe you me. (RK)
(Red Scare)

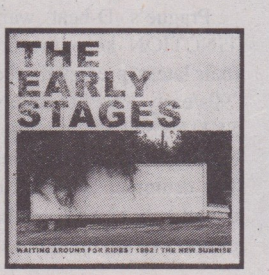
EMPTY HEADS – "Deceiver" EP

So apparently there's this Debt Offensive record label and they live inside my head (see my review of the CANCERS 7", sure to be one of my favorite singles of 2015). EMPTY HEADS play anthemic indie rock/pop punk not very dissimilar to Vancouver's WEED. It's got the same sensitive but not cloying quality, mixed with capital-H-Huge sounding guitars and classic BUILT TO SPILL style melodies. This record is a bulldozer of sensitive guy fuzz worship. I don't like comparing bands like this to DINSAUR JR. because invariably I have to mention that there's not face melting guitar solos, but short of that they do touch on some of the things that make J. Mascis and crew so enchanting. The addition of the pop punk and the echo-y, hazy, near shoegaze-y vocals, also helps it sound more modern. Look man, if you liked WEED's *Gun Control* 7", this will be right up your alley, and if you didn't, get with the program. Shit's tight. (LP)
(Debt Offensive)









EROS MASSACRE / TÉMPANO – split LP

Centered around some brilliantly intricate and often dissonant guitar work, TÉMPANO play a epic, emotive style of modern screamo/crust crossover; fans of the shimmering expanse of CLOUD RAT will find lots to sink their teeth into here. Taking the thin, melodic sound of neocrust forebears like EKKAIA and ICTUS as a blueprint, there's a narrative, cinematic quality to the songs that separates them from mere genre worship. It doesn't always work—there's a clean part on "Nakba" that seriously sounds like it got sampled from a STEVE VAI album—but the highs far outpace the lows. EROS MASSACRE have a similarly melancholic neocrust feel, albeit with samples and a black metal edge provided by the vocals and frequent tremolo picking, slightly rawer overall due to the fact their side was recorded live. Like TÉMPANO, the most impressive thing here is the sheer scope of their sonic domain. Just as every song feels like a journey, the performance taken as a whole feels larger than the sum of its parts. A noteworthy split between two bands that couldn't be more well-matched. (WB)
(Boslevan / Dingleberry / Don't Live Like Me / FxTxPx / Lifeisafunnything / Nonorthzine / Nostalgia + Serigrafía / Pike / Pure Heart / Saltamarges / Unlock Yourself / Upwind / Unnamed / Wooarghaa)

EUTANASIA – "Sentimiento de Agitación!!!" LP

Here is the first vinyl rendition of a classic Peruvian punk tape recorded in 1990. Somewhere at the intersection of the RAMONES and RIP, EUTANASIA distills punk into its raw rock material essentials: catchy, pogo-friendly, yet serious and angry punk. Their commitment to carrying the torch of local underground rock is demonstrated by the covers of both LOS SAICOS "Demolición" and LEUSEMIA. Informative insert made for English speakers outlines the challenges of playing underground music during turbulent times. While your country is busy waging a bloody war between Maoists and a brutal state, one option is to go on creating something amidst the wreckage. This record is that plebian answer to the senseless violence. Forming in 1986, those members who stuck it out in Lima recorded this record in 1990, and then they too fled the country. Crucial recording for Peruvian punk history and a must have for anyone even remotely interested in Latin American punk. (LT)
(Rock SVB)

FEAR OF EXTINCTION – "...And They Still Suffer" LP

Prague's D-beat warriors FEAR OF EXTINCTION keep the crustcore flag flying on their latest, preserving the brawny legacy of late '90s/early '00s Scandinavian touchstones (think SKITSYSTEM) with thick guitars, lurching riffs, and leads that add a nice touch of metallic flair. The drummer is a fucking machine, an almost effortlessly clean force behind the kit. After ten minutes or so, though, I did find myself wishing there was more here to set it apart from its forebears. (WB)
(Fear of Extinction / Phobia)

FRIGHT EYE / MICROBES – split EP

A record whose very obscurity reeks of possible promise, from the most likely unconscious mid '90s bargain bin tribute cover art, to the lack of any contact info, to the blank labels, to the unimaginative band monikers. Hope exists to make you sad, right? Then squint out half a tear for this split, since FRIGHT EYE manage some fuzzy moments of punkdom that reference the mid-tier outfits on Empty Records circa 1993. MICROBES don't really manage to reach that rung; let's say Scooch Pooch demo parade. Not enough to rate hate mail, so how about "eh" mail? Blarrrrrrrg. (RW)
(Halshugga)

FUCKING — "Atomic Orgasm" EP

Cold war psychological/psychosexual/psychosomatic fallout from Midwestern fuckers who (like me) were probably two when the USSR broke up. The recording is appropriately gross, in an unconventional kind of way though. The vocals are mixed uncomfortably high, and the bass sounds like it's radiating from a '90s throwback club night at the bar downstairs. The riffs are buried, but they're there if you want to do the work and dig them out. This could appeal to fans of other recent bent Midwestern interpretations of Scandi-HC and Burning Spirits composition à la ZERO (buyer beware, this one is far more damaged). GAS RAG fans might attempt to pit, but note these tracks are less sticky and glue-damaged and more antagonistic and adolescent. See the insert, presented here without comment: someone named "Beauty and the Beast" is credited as "fingerbanging that fonky bass yah." The lyric sheet smears together nuclear waste and radiation anxiety as metaphors for sexual tension and frustration (or maybe the other way around). The last track, "Sexual Frustration" has a genuine mutant mosh part, craftily dropped, denied, and brought back for anyone who's still paying attention. A withholding and punishing experience I look forward to subjecting myself to at least a few more times. (EW)
(self-released)

FZ-10 – "Kaötika Existencia" EP

I was ready to write this off because of the ultra-derivative raw punk artwork, including but not limited to the "noise not music" symbol and spiky-headed skulls. Fact of the matter is Mexico City's FZ-10 dumped a real hot mess onto this 7-inch platter! Instead of the wash of distortion I expected, they do an unhinged and flailing take on hardcore that recalls '80s South American bands. The playing is amateurish and possibly drunk, but well-rehearsed and brutally delivered. It appears that this is a reissue of their ten-song 2014 demo tape, and I have to say I'm glad it got the vinyl treatment and made its way to my turntable. Limited to 500 and comes with a nice little booklet with lyrics and drawings. Punks interested in what has been going on in Peru and Mexico these days will need to track this down. (MA)
(Rock SVB)

GAFF / SWELLS – split EP

GAFF does two songs, pretty cliché emo hardcore in a late '90s Level Plane Records sort of way. It's mostly spastic and heavy but with moments of light twinkling stuff. There are plenty mathy, technically proficient, shreddy guitar riffs to go along with some straight hardcore. Two vocalists fill out the songs, the one with the deeper yell and the more desperate screamer. The lyrics, I'm sorry to say, are a big reason why people still make fun of emo bands. You sound young. Don't lose hope. SWELLS do one epic songs in four parts. It's also emotional hardcore but not as spastic. It's still heavy (very bass heavy on the tonal spectrum despite the clean guitar sound) and a bit mathy with a mixture of deep, almost growling vocals and higher pitched screaming. There is nothing bad about this record other than the lyrics, which unfortunately are the only memorable part. (PA)
(HFF / Sonic Mystics / What's Left)

GATTACA – LP

This Czech band presents six tracks of superheavy epic crust that owes equal debts to *Souls at Zero*-era NEUROSIS and the Burdette brothers' bands, specifically TRAGEDY and especially HIS HERO IS GONE. The songs are long, but well-written enough that none overstay their welcome and the lyrics are remarkably good, even in translation. When they settle into a good riff, as in album standout track "Panoptikon" or the long, slow build of "Neco Za Neco," they absolutely kill. For a record recorded in a practice space, this sounds completely amazing, clean without being overly polished. As an added bonus, when played at 33rpm instead of the proper 45 this is fucking killer funeral doom in the style of THERGOTHON. Two great records for the price of one, what a deal! (AU)
(Contraszt! / Halo of Flies / Music for Liberation)

GOOD SHADE – "Good Shade" LP

Pretty fucking fast-paced, non-stop rock. Well crafted enough to sound like ARCHERS OF LOAF on crack, yet wild enough to be the MARKED MEN's younger, shyer brother. These Columbus twerps won me over in an instant! The Midwest is totally doing it for me this month. I want to listen to this, like, a lot. (DZ)
(Gut Genug)

HADES MINING COMPANY / SETE STAR SEPT – split EP

If you are looking to fill that vacant hole in your SETE STAR SEPT collection, you'd better hurry because apparently this is very limited. For

those just jumping on, this is not the place to start. Actually, in my opinion, there is no place to start when it comes to this noise-grind (whatever) duo. If you are of the opinion that free jazz means there is no need for skill, intention, or inspiration, then this might just hit the spot. As for me, I guess I "just don't get it." On second thought, I totally get it. I am just not that into watching a live show where one member humiliates another member to tears in front of a half empty room. HADES MINING COMPANY appear to be doing splits with just about any "band" with an awful name and the ability to plug a thing into a computer interface and/or boombox and hit record. These adult men have cool nicknames and sometimes incorporate a saxophone into their brand of sludge-jazz(?). I consider this record the same kind of menace as the 180-gram major label crap clogging up the vinyl pipeline these days. Stick to tapes, they're easier to recycle. (JK)
(Continuum)

HALDOL – 12"

Airy and aggressive deathrock band from Philly, invoking old spirits of RUDIMENTARY PENI, CHRISTIAN DEATH and later FLUX OF PINK INDIANS. Sluggish and angular guitars ring and womp over a head-bopping drum beat. Lyrics touch on social issues with a Marxist bent. Unlike most bands trying to replicate the past they continue the tradition in their own style cleverly embellishing and building upon the foundation with fresh influences. (AP)
(World Gone Mad / Grim Winds)

THE HANGMEN – "What A Girl Can't Do/The Girl Who Faded Away"

This is a reissue of the great 45 from1965. THE HANGMEN were a garage band from Arlington, VA. I was first introduced to "What A Girl Can't Do" by the excellent version LYRES do of it. The original version is fantastic. It is such a catchy, upbeat, wild song. "The Girl Who Faded Away" (mistakenly listed as "Bad Goodbye" on the record label) is a slow ballad. It is nice, but the A side is the one. This note on the sleeve: "Manufactured for Windian Records by Sony Music Entertainment" is a bit off putting, but I guess that's what you gotta do for these things. (CK)
(Windian)

HEX DISPENSERS – "III" CD

HEX DISPENSERS have a heavy RAMONES vibe for sure, but just saying that doesn't do them justice. Sounds like a mix of RAMONES and WIPERS with distorted as fuck bass that give their sound a dark punk edge. It's also got a serious dose of darkwave and synth (most evident in "Agatha's Antlers" and "One Less Ghost"), but there's still a catchy pop component to their song melodies that keeps things more spooky than menacing. And just about every song on here with the exception of "Hypersleep" is completely fucking danceable. "Parallel," "Agatha's Antlers," and "I Hope the Sun Explodes Today" being the most suasive of the bunch. (CR)
(Alien Snatch!)

hMAS – "Fear God Honour the King" LP

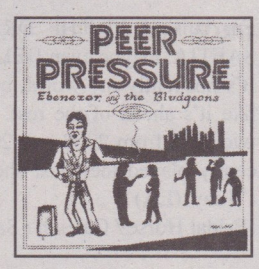
Pressing a record by an obscure Tasmanian band from the '90s sounds crazy until you listen to it and you remember that noisy art music inspired equally by British post-punk and American '80s college and indie rock is totally in vogue right now. If you believed the liner notes, there had never before been a band with some dumb kids that no one cared about who played sloppy, noisy pop songs with punk energy in basements, rundown houses, laundromats or wherever they could and never got the respect they deserved. But come on, it was 1997, bands had been playing this exact same music for years. It wasn't new or groundbreaking. So don't read the liner notes. The record is not bad. The better songs on here are the more pop influenced, less punk ones. At times they have a feel of a Flying Nun band but with more fuzz on the guitars. A couple songs sound a bit like CRAYON. One thing that ties it all together is that you can tell they listened to the PIXIES a whole lot. Altogether, it's a cool document from a specific time and place that will probably mean a lot more to the people that were there—but that doesn't mean that you won't enjoy it as well. (PA)
(Homeless)

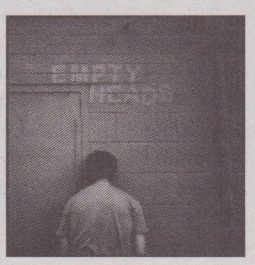
HORROR VACUI – "Return of the Empire" LP

Italy's creatures of the night return with a sophomore LP of catchy deathrock and gothy post-punk. I enjoyed their 2012 debut, *In Darkness You Will Feel Alright*, but if that was like a horror movie, *Return of the Empire* is more like a noir thriller. In between these two releases I also had the pleasure of seeing them live last Halloween. They do not disappoint, not only because they actually *like* what they're doing (it's not some trend or passing phase—these punx really is goths!) but also because their execution is impeccable. Both in the studio and live they work together excellently to weld an aesthetic and create an atmosphere, conjuring mental images and delivering a story, basically transporting you to a world that lurks not only between the notes but within them. The result is a damn well delivered record with lots of memorable moments to get the hairs on the back of your neck tingling: the infectious riffing and Koppa's snarling on "The Right Cure," the dreamy orchestration on "'Till the Last Drop," the burning bass and anguished vocals on "Time," closer opus "Desperate Adelia" (also released as a single in 2014). If you're a fan of SCREAMING DEAD, SISTERS OF MERCY, the CURE, SIEKIERA et al and haven't yet heard of HORROR VACUI, then maybe you've been living under a rock. Time to face the daylight, even if only long enough to go buy this record. And definitely see them live if they come through your town! (LA)
(Avanti! / Legion of the Dead)

HURRICÄDE – "Anachronisms" LP

Do you like screamo? Do you like structure and syncopation in your post-hardcore? Do you like loaded, agitated music made by emotionally charged youths baffled by concepts of time? Then HURRICÄDE from Girona—in the northeastern most corner in Spain—will be right up your alley! Screamo vocals that are not actually annoying (more compelling, exasperated), multi-layered compositions and off-kilter chords to keep you on your toes; the drumming is imaginative and on-point throughout—I especially liked it on "Adrift." The full, warm bass and post-rock crescendos that creep in here and there, thankfully, keep this from being too mathy to keep up with, and the production—which on "The Wires," I won't lie, reminds me of FUGAZI—makes this feel intimate while still exuding hostility and inner restlessness. There is a twisting and turning intensity driving the whole record forward, an evident angst to the whole execution, which is as precise as it is dynamic. "Las Arañas" (which is the only song sung in Spanish) has a killer intro riff and somewhat cinematic sensation to it—my fave track.





For fans of AT THE DRIVE IN, REFUSED, SAETIA, maybe even HELL IS FOR HEROES? It's not really my world, but this record sounds like it's ahead of the rest. It appears they have two 10"s from 2008 and 2010 and that they recently played their last show. Good swan song I'd say. (LA)
(Bridal Horse / Caleiah / Saltamarges)

INSTINCT OF SURVIVAL – "Call of the Blue Distance" LP

This one is loud. These guys blast off straight away with some massive, shredding riffage, and serious guitar heroics, in the vein of HIGH ON FIRE. They soon settle in to a more '80s anarcho punk sound like the SUBHUMANS, but they've got some pummeling metal tonnage behind it all. The B-side gets real dirgy. It has a heavy *No Sanctuary*-era AMEBIX influence going on. Everything is turned all the way up, and it sounds good to me. (BA)
(Agipunk)

THE INTELLIGENCE – "Vintage Future" LP

I have really enjoyed previous records by this band, but this stab at Adult Rock leaves me perplexed. It sounds like something that would be played in the background at a hip furniture store. There's a song that sounds like an outtake from one of BECK's more melancholic records, or perhaps a SHINS LP, and while, yes, there are songs with that Scanlon-style FALL guitar sound with added West Coast affectations particular to the INTELLIGENCE, for the most part this is blog rock for blog rockers. I relistened to old INTELLIGENCE LPs to make sure I didn't have this band confused with another one because this was such a disconcerting experience. Even the more rambunctious songs sound like Budweiser commercials aimed at alterna-college kids compared to their old records. I think this will probably get insanely great reviews on every indie blog and I suspect that this band probably already think *MRR* is for losers and ancient crusters with DEVIATED INSTICT buttpatches covering their ears, so it's not like some snide review from my brains is gonna set their career backwards or break their hearts...but I was not expecting to dislike an INTELLIGENCE record. (LG)
(In the Red)

KIM & LEANNE – "True West" LP

KIM is Kim Salmon of the SCIENTISTS. LEANNE is Leanne Cowie, the SCIENTISTS' tour manager who bought a drum set from the recently departed drummer Brett Rixon, learned how to play drums and ended up being the final SCIENTISTS' drummer. However, don't expect this to be some kind of SCIENTISTS rehash. It definitely is not. If you've listened to any of Salmon's work since their break-up you know that isn't happening. There's some garage punk, some art rock, some twisted blues and weirdo folk. "Freudian Slippers" is my favorite song. It's a straightforward, extra-catchy, '90s style garage punk song. Or maybe I like "In A Nick/Just A Tick" more, for all the same reasons. A slow, plodding version of ROLLING STONES' "Dead Flowers" is twisted in all the right ways. And I hate hearing ROLLING STONES covers. Leave all your preconceptions at the door and enjoy this record for what it is. Then I guarantee you'll like it a lot. (CK)
(Hozac)

KING FLAMINGO – "Astro-Tone" EP

If you're going to do the tired novelty-kitsch thing you've got to at least make it a little weird. KING FLAMINGO manages to inject a bit of life into spooky Halloween surf. Listening to all four of these songs in one sitting is a bit much. However one or two at a time is enjoyable. (CK)
(Resurrection)

KOOL 100S — "We Buy Gold" EP

Not sure if these Kansas City Masterpiece BBQ rockers identify more with the South or the Midwest — it's a contentious thing in the Show-Me State — but for what it's worth I can imagine rough takes of this record having turned up in demo bins of either Hozac or Goner. The riffs are not super inspired, but it's hard not to like something with tracks called "Cockroach Exploder" and "Fight the Mailman" at least a little bit. The latter is probably the best one on this 7" EP. There is a misguided slow song on the B-side, watch out for that. No lyric sheet or member breakdown in this package. Eric Hosmer might be in this band. This probably will not appeal to the cosmopolitan Camel Crush smokers I run into outside of shows here in San Francisco, but it could win over others in the menthol set. (EW)
(The Garbage Shop)

LAST CRUSADE – "Deadbeat" EP

Another new-ish British Oi! band joins the ranks and this one brought some tunes! Four tracks: three originals here, while their choice to do a WARRIOR KIDS cover should give an inkling to their sound. It's melodic and catchy, but still rough around the edges. Singer Karl's guttural rasp keeps things from getting too soft. "Dead Beat" tackles the daily struggles and pressures of life, "Morally Bankrupt" takes aim at the gutter press, and "Cycle Of Terror" has a few choice words to say about religion. While those words don't single out any one religion specifically, read from a certain perspective they could be interpreted as anti-Muslim. In the current climate of anti-immigrant hysteria in Europe, that's a fine line to tread. I'd want to know exactly where LAST CRUSADE stands. That, coupled with the Union Jack behind the stage and the three lions in their logo are enough to raise questions for me. I grew up in Scotland dodging the BNP so when greeted with skinheads boldly stating their English pride it makes me uneasy. I've got no time for grey areas. Hopefully I'm wrong about LAST CRUSADE as I do like the music and they seem like a decent bunch of chaps. I'm sure this review is exactly what they expected from the PC police here at *MRR*. (AM)
(Longshot / Rebellion)

LEATHER – "Easy" LP

Easy is anything but, recalling many the noisy, strangle-punk outfits littering our wasteland, but with a completely powerful, more traditionally HC and totally focused guitar attack. It still manages to gnash, though. Equal parts PISSED JEANS and MUSK? Could be. The band seems to be grounded enough in their own hopeless, frustrating reality, which makes this immediately relatable. Quality riffs for hadit-upta-here weirdos. (MC)
(Slugsalt)

LESION – "Sectarian Rites" EP

Dark and brooding, this 7" is like reading *The Futurist Manifesto*: gritty, raw, and confusing (but also oddly triumphant). Do these guys read poetry? Write back if Mina Loy or William Carlos Williams ring a bell. Listening to this, I couldn't get BRAINBOMBS out of my mind. Maybe it's the production? The vocals are buried, layered in reverb and the entire thing sounds like it was recorded in the windowless concrete room Richard Ramirez used to hide out in here in SF. It's definitely faster than BRAINBOMBS (it's not hard to be) without breaking away at lightning speed. The tracks are plodding and primitive. The vocals hint at the macabre without going into too much detail (*"Raw palms on the hand that feeds / remove the weak / primitive times…")* and the whole package has is reminiscent of HOAX. For fans of hurting your hands while poking studs through leather, moving up a gauge size, rereading Edgar Allan Poe. (MW)
(Adult Crash)

LONG KNIFE – "Meditations On Self Destructions" LP

I was just gonna be like "if you like POISON IDEA blah blah blah..." but two songs in I'm kinda putting my foot in my mouth. "Exile" and "Dressing Up A Drunk" are so well-written and have such insane hooks, while other tracks like "In My Brain" and "Burning Will"—while still raging—have such unabashed POISON IDEA-esque attributes that it's hard for me to keep up the praise. Even the lyrics and vocal delivery recall Jerry A's signature self-loathing and darkness. The few appearances of keyboards and unexpected dramatic turns away from hardcore do a lot to increase the diversity, making the whole thing more album-like rather than a mere group of songs. No doubt this will become a party record at many punk houses across the globe, and rightfully so, and I feel kinda like a sucker telling you—this is a fucking great LP! (MA)
(Long Knife)

LUNCHBOX – "Smash Hits" EP

I could easily write this off as pure sugary pop, but that would be a massive fail on my part.

Sure, this record is drenched in the sweet stuff, but it's also pretty rocking. Sorta like an even sweeter SUPERCHUNK, but abrasive enough to feel quite at home in whatever shitty bar or living room that they get thrown in. I really like this. Not too sweet, not too poppy—kinda perfect! (DZ)
(Jigsaw)

MANDATES – "In The Back Of Your Heart" LP

Extremely slick, extremely catchy punk with overt power pop leanings. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to crack the code of where these Canadians are coming from, but I appreciate that they truly go for it guitar-wise, alternating between aping Johnny Thunders and any combo of THIN LIZZY dudes. If you're a fan of BARRERACUDAS (also heard this month) or the catchiest entries from the Douchemaster or Dirtnap rosters, this is all you. (MC)
(Hosehead / Taken By Surprise / Teenage Rampage)

MARDOU – "Rimbaud/Bounty Hunter"

Understated and achingly dreary—though never boring—this 45 by MARDOU is an intriguing little nugget of bedroom ennui, floating in a cold, nostalgic space somewhere between American post-punk and '80s alternative. "Rimbaud" is pure gorgeous misery, the sonic equivalent of dead flowers in black lace, and the soft, longing vocals have a hair-raisingly stark quality to them. The relatively upbeat "Bounty Hunter" hides a paranoid edge beneath its anthemic exterior, with some cool noisy guitar wheedling cropping up towards the end. After a couple of spins I'm already starting to fall in love with this, and I look forward to hearing these songs a hundred times more. (WB)
(Torn Light)

DAN MELCHIOR'S BROKE REVUE – "Lords of the Manor" LP

The welcome return of DAN MELCHIOR'S BROKE REVUE after a ten-year hiatus (although Melchior himself has been anything but idle, cranking out scores of releases in the meantime). This new one reflects a slight change in tone since Dan relocated permanently to the USA. Musically loose and sprawling (only seven tracks spread out over the two sides of this album), vocally deadpan and sardonic. Instrumentation and arrangements are still pretty bare-bones: the rhythm section and keyboards lock into a repetitive groove while the guitar skitters, wails, and scratches over the top. If they discovered Neolithic standing stones on the outskirts of the Medway towns this HAWKWIND meets HEADCOATS sound would be perfect for the first solstice party. (AM)
(In the Red)

MERCENÁRIAS – "Demo 1983" EP

There is probably no band like MERCENÁRIAS. This 3/4 femme Brazilian band, better known for their late '80s post-punk repertoire, made an extraordinary first recording that seems out of time and place. Totally weird, awesome, and fierce: peculiar gruff vocals that predate grindcore layered over angular choppy rhythms making it sound like someone took a chainsaw to the rock song and assembled the hacked up pieces back together with lots of sharp edges sticking out all over the place. They were definitely ahead of their time with irreverent and unapologetic lyrics taking a shit all over patriarchy and scandalizing audiences (the song "Honra" never made it onto their recordings until now). The story in the booklet of sending a talent scout running after hearing one of their songs reminds me of the philosophy of Spain's VULPESS, active around the same time, who got a TV program shut down in Spain for performing a song called "I Like Being a Slut." Nice packaging with a semi-bilingual booklet in English and Portuguese containing old flyers, pictures, and lyrics. This is an important piece of Brazilian punk history and crucial international punk artifact with a renewed relevance in 2015. (LT)
(Dama da Noite / Nada Nada)

MIND CONTROL – "Dig" EP

Slam-paced hardcore that fits well in the current style: hard pogo parts with a S.H.I.T.-like fury. It also brings to mind the snotty rage of the mid '00s like SURF NAZIS MUST DIE. MIND CONTROL is from Minnesota, not New York, but this oughta go over well with the Toxic State fans, especially with artwork by Sam Ryser. Everything is on point here, but the vocals are perfect piss and vinegar. (SZ)
(Forward)

CONAN NEUTRON AND THE SECRET FRIENDS – "The Enemy Of Everyone" LP

I don't even know where to start with this. Heidi wandered in and asked, "Is this Christian rock?" Maybe that's a good place to start. It's like a cross (right side up) of CREED and the MELVINS. Dale Crover of the aforementioned band plays drums and you get horrible cover art by David Yow of JESUS LIZARD—the '90s are in full shaggy haired effect. The awful crap I had to suffer through in that fabled decade in search of some decent punk is coming back to slap me in the face for a second time. Jesus saves. (RO)
(Seismic Wave Entertainment)

NO FUN – "How I Spent My Bummer Vacation" CD

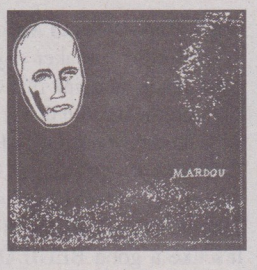
This is a punk garage trio from Germany with a female singer/guitarist who sings in English and guys for the rhythm section. With no German accent on the vocals, this has a retro crooning feel at times but this band does thrash—somewhere in between the TWEENS and TILT with a bit of SHANNON AND THE CLAMS. Maybe the GEARS with a kickass gal singer? A decent release from a band with a gal who is only getting started. (RL)
(Asset Discos / Concrete Jungle)

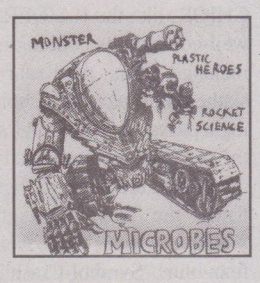
NOXIOUS FUMES – "Commencement Bay" EP

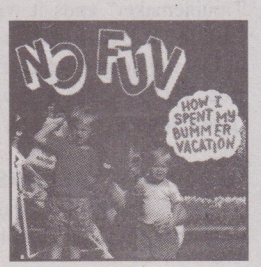
This 7" is a vinyl issue of this early / mid '80s Tacoma, Washington band's demo tape, which was one of the early K Records releases. Five tracks of skuzzy, mid-paced hardcore punk tunes that only really hit a thrash pace on the track "Bulimia." Great stuff. My only gripe is the complete lack of information accompanying the release (JU)
(Perennial)

NUCLEAR AGE – "Look Around" EP

I feel like, in 2015, writing a good hardcore record has less to do with breaking the mold (maybe pushing the envelope a little if you want to stand out) and more with finding where you fit in the overall canon. What it comes down to is, I really like this record *because* I really like HARDSTANCE, *because* I really like a lot of the harder Equal Vision releases. The vocalist's delivery reminds me of a less burly FLOORPUNCH, which is pretty tight. Even though these fellas are from DC, this record has a West Coast vibe, which I appreciate. They coulda opened INSTED's last gig at Spanky's and then gone the way of the Dodo right before hardcore kids started playing pop punk (think SAVES







THE DAY sharing members of MOUTHPIECE and HANDS TIED or the bassist of CHAIN OF STRENGTH later going on to ALIEN ANT FARM). I like the sense of straightedge evangelism, preachy but non-judgmental, heavy with meaning but not so convoluted that the layman can't understand the gist of the track, "Why don't you take a chance, man/And come with me… That shit won't set you free/Just take a chance and come with me." This record is positive, hard, with all the right riffs at all the right times. Solid record. For fans of running track in high school, serial monogamy, New Balances. (MW)
(React!)

THE NVS – "A Perfect Vision" CD

Garage punk rock'n'roll from DC, the singer sounds like a poppier BRODY DALLE, the music is kinda the same, watered down and safe, perfect for the side stage of the Warped Tour. (AP)
(Big Neck)

OBN IIIs – "Worth A Lot Of Money" LP

The killer tweaker psychedelic prisoner artwork made me think this would hit a little harder right off the bat, but this is growing on me in a big way. At their best, OBN IIIs are akin to RADIO BIRDMAN, ANGEL CITY and THIN LIZZY. In fact, "Let The Music" is the best THIN LIZZY song that's not a THIN LIZZY song maybe ever. It's like a good BLUE ÖYSTER CULT record that sounds a little light on first listen but grows to be one of your favorites. Maybe this review sounds a little vague in my foggy mental state but let's just say I'm becoming a convert to the legions of OBN IIIs fans. Take it sleazy. (RO)
(12XU)

OBNOX – "Wiglet" LP

OBNOX has three full-length records for 2015. That is PAUL REVERE & THE RAIDERS territory, like 1965 bang-'em-out for the screaming hordes according to the seasons territory. Like, uh, DAN MELCHIOR territory. Like MELCHIOR, like the RAIDERS, you start to spot the well-cooked bits bobbing in a sea of undercooked mélange. This particular outing is absolutely slathered in fuzz and echoing effects, like drowning a passable steak in A1 sauce, friends. Some of the stuff on here is sonically programmatic, but as mentioned there are strong points: "If You Wanna Know the Truth" is a great barricade-stormer, "Jailhouse Blues" is a welcome respite from the fuzz-blur. "Symbol Crash" starts the second side off with eye-widening intensity and "Cleveland Troublemaker" ends it with what sounds like a BUTTHOLE SURFERS outtake. Take it or leave it, I let my itchy forefinger on the tonearm lift decide. My forefinger is an *asshole*. (RW)
(Ever/Never)

PATOIS COUNSELORS – "Clean Skits" EP

This is a really neat sounding band outta North Carolina. They do…neo-new wave, synth punk by way of post-punk? There's the rawness of the early TALKING HEADS-esque "Guidelines For Schooling." At other times they remind me of a mix that somehow manages to put together JOY DIVISION with the lower fidelity of a group like the CONEHEADS along with the MINUTEMEN (sans the latter band's twang). Vocally it sounds a bit like THURSTON MOORE (which isn't a bad thing) but it's also not an exact replica either. So, really what I'm saying is that this is totally worth your time, something rather fresh sounding regardless of the reference points. (JD)
(Negative Jazz)

PAWNS – "Eternal Return" EP

I'm just gonna get this out of the way: people need to stop adhering to the "post-punk rules." It's really unoriginal, and I know you're trying to create the atmosphere, but at least push some boundaries, throw some rules out the window! Rules are stupid as hell anyways, especially in creative outputs. This is a record that borrows heavily from the rules, creating music that is enjoyable and clever, but it's not something we haven't heard before. Lots of reverb on the vocals, distorted guitars, galloping bass and drums, formulaic post-punk for those who can't get enough. (AP)
(self-released)

PICCADILLY CIRCUS – "Till I Get To The Top/Do You Feel It"

Nice unish'd garage from Ohio '67! Piccadilly Circus is the product of some US Army brat that did a lil' time in Jolly Olde England, caught a serious fuckin' case o' TeenBeat Fever and returned home to front a quasi-scratchy garage rock'n'roll racket group. A tale as old as time, really. You may live in a world where there's already too much of this gunk around. I don't live in that world. I want it all, even it veers toward the confused, lite-psych wimpiness heard here. Still enough teeth to chafe, though! As a fatty that's been marginalized by the other middle-aged hep cats cuz I also dig music made this century, I look forward to wowing the other mod geezers with my Piccadilly Circus knowledge at the next denture cleaning / tiki party. (MC)
(B-W)

PRETTY PRETTY – "Talkin' to the Walls" EP

Okay, here's the deal. If you're a fan of straightforward power pop, which is both melodic and catchy, you'll be a fan of this. Sure, it's power pop, but they're not afraid of drums and guitars and bass. The (guest?) vocals on "Monster" are particularly pretty. There's also a DEAD MOON cover, for those who are into that sort of thing. Good stuff. (KK)
(Rad Girlfriend)

RATA NEGRA – "Corasones" EP

This Madrid trio made a brief appearance in a Los Angeles backyard this past summer, and I'm lucky to have caught them. Fans of JUANITA Y LOS FEOS will recognize the vocals, as two members are shared with that band plus the drummer from LA URSS. They're drawing from the third wave of Iberian punk and new wave, bands like DETECTORS and DESECHABLES. This is a necessary record for anyone interested in what is going on in the Madrid scene and in Spanish punk in general. At times I am reminded of GENERACIÓN SUICIDA, sharing a passion for catchy and surfy melancholic guitar leads. Depressing lyrics about the soul-sucking drudgery of the city, heartbreak, and alienation are on point. Lucky for the Yanks this is released by a California label, so pick it up. (LT)
(Discos MMM / Walden)

RAW PONY – "Bo Diddley/Shattered"

Raw is right. This is some cool, trashy garage rock. RAW PONY take the well-known Bo Diddley Beat and turn it into a noisy, tough rockin' tune. "Shattered" has a bit of a dreamy quality to it, but also incorporates raw guitars and distorted vocals. This is great. (CK)
(Heel Turn)

THE REGRESSIVES – CD

A New York street punk band in the vein of RANCID and ANTI-FLAG, these former members of the STOCKYARD STOICS spit out the political tunes. Including a separate lyric book means they want you to know what they are singing about. They also slow it down at times for a GOGOL BORDELLO feel. I didn't love this because there have been so many similar sounding bands but these guys are good at it and are certainly passionate. (RL)
(Stoics)

REMEDIALS – "Four Song" EP

I vaguely recognize this 1981 Canada power-pop picture sleeve, but it's been a long time since I seen a copy. I guess Montreal records never really got outta Montreal, cuz I can't even remember the Montreal KBD grailz off the top of my head. Maybe DISCORDS 7" or some shit. Well, to be honest, I was expecting some limp dick shit, but this is just the kind of low-key punk-ish bar rock shit I like to file in boxes around here and impress my friends with. I'm not sure any of them are actually impressed, but I am certainly impressed with myself. If these Montreal losers (including a "chick" bass player) actually liked a "punk" band in 1981, it was prolly the STRANGLERS. They have moustaches and shit y'know. Tasty if you've got some extra shelf space. (GB)
(Meanbean)

RETARDED RATS – "Underground Is Dead" EP

This one took awhile to get going, beginning with a bunch of started then immediately stopped intros which come off as mini-songs. It goes twangy guitar part, then a few sparse seconds of some trippy post-punk, then a PLASMATICS-type gonzo metalloid punk bit followed by a Jap-

anese noise punk section and somehow ends around around a SONIC YOUTH/LIVE SKULL-type mini-jam. I suppose these are various records from their collection they put on and off and it's a neat idea. When they get into it proper they make some rather good psychobilly-infused punk. Plus, there're no bad tattoos, dice or hot rods imagery anywhere, thank gords. (JD)
(Killjoy)

RUINS – "Within" LP

This German thrasher starts off with wailing ominous tones and echoing guitar riffs, heavy pummeling at a *Night on Bald Mountain* pace. Guttural vocals remind me of SCATHA meets CELTIC FROST and it's slow without being too doomy, hardcore embracing epic metal with depressing rock jam interludes before a racket of a blast-beats kick in. There are D-beat parts, but everything has that KYLESA or TRAGEDY-esque composition. Overall, RUINS *Within* is another great full-bodied proto-hardcore punk metal album with powerful chords, drumming and monstrous vocal abilities. (JR) (Twisted Chords / Halo of Flies)

SACCHARINE TRUST – "Paganicons" LP

This remains one of the coolest/wildest records SST ever released. SACCHARINE TRUST retained the art punk tendencies of the first wave of West Coast punk while playing hardcore shows, and this collision of interests shows in their inventive, furtive, explosive playing on this their first and eternally classic LP. It's hard to imagine how they came up with their insane sound, especially now, in an era where bands form just to replicate older bands perfectly. It's like they made punk bend to their needs, rather than bothering to fall in line with what "punk" was supposed to be. You can hear the collective love of beat poetry and free jazz, as well as British art punk bands like the FALL and GANG OF FOUR and the fertile San Pedro punk scene where surf punk bands played with performance artists, with added encouragement from the MINUTEMEN. The guitar sound is just the coolest, a flailing insistent howl that resonates with the otherworldly vocal stylings, which are reminiscent of a ranting maniac who has had it up to here and can't take a minute more. This record sounds like the frustrated working man, the desolation and loneliness of the underbelly. "We Don't Need Freedom" a song written from the perspective of a John Birch Society dad, the anthemic "I Am Right," the truly incandescent "Human Certainty." You know this record is pretty much a perfect indication of what hardcore/punk could be but very rarely ever is...The excitement that punkers can finally get a hold of *Paganicons* and not pay insane record collector prices is tempered by the fact that the legitimacy of this release has publicly been called into question by the band. The punk rumor mill asserts that Greg Ginn seized some Euro bootlegs, sold them on SST.com then repressed this when it was clear that demand was high. The band was intending on reissuing it themselves and it has been claimed that the bootleg sounds better than the SST version. I haven't heard the boot, but this is obviously not a high-quality 180g Numero Group/Superior Viaduct-style reissue. It was made from a record not the original tapes, and it's up to you whether you a) notice/care about stuff like that or b) want to give Greg Ginn more money that he won't pass on to the musicians who played on this record. (LG)
(SST)

SEA OF STORMS – "Dead Weight" LP

Wow, this is like the ultimate combination of things I never want to hear emulated ever again. FOO FIGHTERS plus SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE plus the vocal stylings of QUICKSAND. It's real weird to imagine a modern indie band playing this music, like is it a weird cash grab at bigger and better horizons, or are they trying to bring this utterly innocuous music back to the streets and DIY clubs? I'm super bored of all the fucking garbage muzak that's sounded like U2 for the last decade. Is '90s emotional bro rock going to be the new industry standard? (GB)
(Self Aware / Tor Johnson)

SEX CRIME – "I Am an Observer" EP

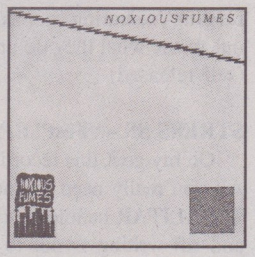
The last EP by these French synthwavers was killer and this is just as sick! Although it appears it came out in 2014?! We just got it? C'mon, Jonnycat! If you dig TYRADES-style aggro-snot with a seductive French accent and toxic synthesizer bursts then this will take you by the throat and throttle you until you are at last soothed. I think they are now based in Portland?! Or maybe they are an international friendship band and are just taking over all places with their hatewave sound vibrations. Either way, it's time to submit to this crime wave! (LG)
(Jonnycat)

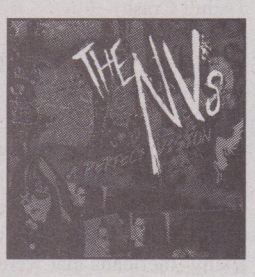
SKULLCRACK – "Cut It Down" EP

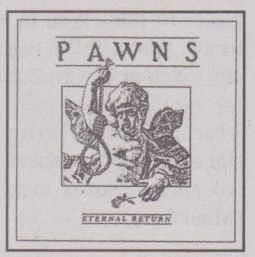
This one's for all the hardcorepunkmetalspeedfreaks out there. It's got almost everything a young thrash prince desires in a record: blazing guitar solos, relentless speed picking, but sadly, bereft of any ode to the pleasures inherent in the consumption of a finely malted domestic beverage, or the windswept, skin tingly pleasure of bombing a hill with your favorite dude compadres that seems requisite post *The Art of Partying*. There is a track about missing the pleasures of being young, however, which reminds me of the coming of age trope in many independent dramedy films: "*Stolen beer, no fear, nothing better to do / close my eyes into yesterday and it's all through*." The magic of childhood is real folks, and it's fleeting. MUNICIPAL WASTE is a pretty apt influence. Everything special they created in the early to mid '00s has been spinning around in the heads of tons of kids willing to recreate the magic of crossover. But this sounds more like *Focused*-era BONES BRIGADE. Not altogether unenjoyable, the best part of this record is the guitar solos (if you're into that sort of thing) and the punchy, candy-coated drum production (again, if you're into that sort of thing). For fans of party-time lime, breaking in to the botanical gardens after the bars close to drink beer with your friends, getting your GED. (MW)
(Adios Motherfucker)

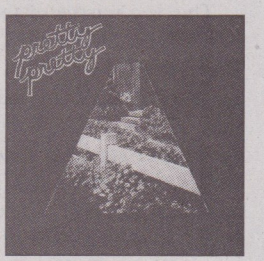
SMÅSTADSLIV – "Näkyjä" EP

Originally formed seven years ago in Helsinki, SMÅSTADSLIV—which means "small city life" in Finnish—play multi-layered, aggressive, melodic hardcore. It's an interesting mix of old and new. The brusque, snarly vocals are sung in Finnish, the guitars are overall harmoniously inclined with well-placed, catchy hooks, harmonized leads and riff sequences that keep your attention; like on the whole B-side, which brought to mind DEATH SIDE as channeled by ANTIMOB. It's all coated in a layer of feedback, backed by solid, D-beat-based "däkä-däkä" drumming, with roomy production giving the dynamics some space to resonate. These guys seem to have a pretty wide-









ranging collection of influences and I'd be curious to see what they do next. (LA)
(self-released)

STRESS SS – "Fest" EP

Oh my god, this record is a musical painkiller. All you really need to know is that Poffen from TOTALITÄR handles vocals, and that the power and riff-writing is not to far off from his best-known band at their most pounding and straightforward, albeit played even faster and tighter here. This does sound like a product of 2015, in that this would not be mistaken for lost tracks on production grounds, but this is in no way a negative, and not a second of this 7" is anything less than a certified banger. In a world of (ex) straightedge fancy lads, art school pretenders, Dreading While White metrocrusties, and fest-hopping socialites failing at feeble stabs at this style, accept no substitutes. This record has killed Spikey Jacket, along with Dangly Earring. Please play California, if not the entire world. DG)
(Adult Crash)

BILLY SYNTH – "We Have Got To Make It On Our Own" LP

Not only am I fucking *stoked* I got a BILLY SYNTH record to review, but it's the fucking SINGLES COMP which is right the fuck where BILLY SYNTH records are at. I mean, the first album *is* rad, but the EPs are the shit. There ain't many 'mericans that were mixing minimal electronics with punk-fuckin-rawk in the '70s/'80s, and BILLY SYNTH is easily one of the best places to start. With most touted "synth punk" bands, you're lucky to get one punky track on any given new wave turd. BILLY SYNTH EPs are synth punk-as-fuck art damage blah blah what have you start to finish. Not sure why all his shit is severely forgotten, hopefully these reissues will jolt some losers' memories. SICK! (GB)
(Mind Cure)

BILLY SYNTH AND THE TURN UPS – "Off The Deep End" LP

This is a reissue of the first BILLY SYNTH AND THE TURN UPS album, originally released in 1980 on Billy's own Cracked Records. As if that wasn't any indication, this is weirdo punk. The recordings are rough and lo-fi. The synthesizer sound is superbly B-movie cheesy. Billy sings with a punk attitude. All that noise combines to make an excellent album. So excellent that even some of the predictable covers like "I Wanna Be Your Dog" and "Surfin' USA" sound good. However, the original songs are way better than the covers. My favorite is "Low Class Boy" which starts out with a manic synth riff and has Synth aping Johnny Rotten's vocals. This release is missing two tracks from the original album and has added in their place a bonus take on "Sister Ray" which seems as if it may have been recorded much later than the rest of the album. It still sounds cool though. (CK)
(Mind Cure)

TEMPORAL SLUTS – "Cosmocracy/Rum Dark Room"

Somewhere in the deepest, darkest, most ignored section of my singles collection sits at least one TEMPORAL SLUTS entry (probably half of a split), so I basically feel like I'm hearing them anew in the 21st century with this 'un. Cite shit like the SAINTS and LAZY COWGIRLS all you want, it takes soul-deep levels of gumption to approach those heights and these Italian sluts miss the mark. Barroom rock'n'roll with punk sneering, aided by piano on the flip, but not saved by it. Look elsewhere for this month's fix. (MC)
(Mental Beat / Striped)

TOYBOAT TOYBOAT TOYBOAT – "Ample Fire" CD

Weirdo party jazz consisting of drums, bass, trumpet, and...Mr. Quintron's world-famous Drum Buddy. Sometimes reminiscent of that killer UNGH! record, it's obvious that these guys are fans of DEVO, BIG BOYS, Fela Kuti, Miles Davis, and most likely, some fucked up cartoons. While it may not be what the punkest of the punx are clamoring for, if you like jazz, party jams, quirk, fucked-up time changes and other wildness (like I sure as fuck do), you'll wanna check out what these nerds are up to. (DZ)
(self-released)

DWIGHT TWILLEY BAND – "Fire Fly/Livin' in the City"

It took me like 20 years of collecting records to get over my aversion towards touching a DWIGHT TWILLEY record. Well, it's happening right now, and I'm not like, super duper bummed about it anyway. "Fire Fly" is kinda boring in a CHEAP TRICK album filler track kinda way, but this "Livin' in the City" flipside cut is kinda hitting the right spot, like one of the more rocking BIG STAR cuts you always wish there were more of. And damn if those monotone backing vox don't sound just like VELVETS-era Lou Reed. (GB)
(Hozac)

THE UKIAH DRAG — "Crypt Cruiser" 12"

Three originals and a STOOGES cover filling up a 12"—is *this* the record where I finally "get" the UKIAH DRAG? Can a blues-punk band have an organ player and not be totally embarrassing? The answer to both these questions is an enthusiastic "maybe!" My initial ambivalence might just be a mood thing. The only drugs I've ever done are speed and fake ecstasy, so I may never be able to fully comprehend the strung-out vibes of a band like this. One minute, I'm feeling it: spiteful characters drawn up in an in-command deadpan over ROWLAND S. HOWARD riffment. The next, I'm settling into the cinematic vibes but have become unsettled with my own taste upon realizing it could be the soundtrack to a montage scene on *True Detective*. All in all though, this is more of a *Deadwood* vision (our singer sounds like Jeffrey Lee Pearce reading for Al Swearingen), an attentively realized and captivatingly barren Western landscape. (EW)
(Wharf Cat)

VACATION – "Back to the Land" 7"

This is an interesting one. On the one hand it's like a wall of noise. On the other hand, it's super catchy. It's a super catchy wall of noise. It's almost like the early JESUS AND MARY CHAIN stuff, except that it's not nearly as poppy, which means it's actually nothing like it. I really am digging this. I'm not kidding; it's like catchy noise. Wait a second. Is the B-side just a different version of the A-side cut? How cool is that? (KK)
(Dead Broke Rekerds)

VACATION – "The Do Shit Wax" 10"

VACATION descended upon *MRR* with a vengeance this month. This release is a remastered vinyl edition of the band's first six-song demo tape, pressed onto the always-confusing 10" format. ("Always-confusing" because it's less vinyl but usually costs the same [or more] to press than 12" records). Repackaged with new art, the recording still sounds raw and rough, because there's only so much polish you can put on your first demo recording. For a debut, the band already sounds confident and tight, playing mid-paced and faster melodic punk about disillusionment, drunken nights in other cities, and bikes. This one is out there for true fans of the band, because I feel that they've surpassed the quality of this in the intervening years, but it's also nice to have these concrete documents of where a band is coming from…even if they've already re-recorded some of these songs on other releases. It's good and raw sounding, but if you're just starting out with this band, track down any of their stellar LPs. (GH)
(Let's Pretend)

VACATION – "Non-Person" LP

This Cincy four-piece could've easily recorded this LP quickly and cheaply and they would have *still* had a great DIY, anthemic dance party on their hands. They didn't, though, and it's apparent that a lot of time and effort went into making this record sound pretty fucking great. A super fly mesh of Midwest REPLACEMENTS loving punk, '90s dreamy pop, and maybe a quick bong rip or two. The art is great; the lyrics are cool and sad and urgent. This is fucking good, y'all, and getting multiple spins here at my crib! (DZ)
(Don Giovanni)

VEGAS – "Da Capo/Among the Shades"

From the looks of the sleeve it is almost impossible to tell if this band is called VEGAS or not. There is a poorly scanned drawing of a skeletal Kaiser Wilhelm reaper on one side and a crest of arms that is just the letter "V" on the other. Musically, one side sounds like some kind of "blackened" neo-folk played by SXE kids who heard that it's ok to like DEATH IN JUNE. The song on the other side has a drum machine and sounds like a low-res version of RAMMSTEIN complete

with lyrics in what sounds like German and a seriously goofy bass line. Sorta perplexed by what is going on here, but hopefully this will help land that guest spot opening for KING DUDE at Cesar's Palace 2026. (JK)
(Bezerker)

WALK PROUD – "Too Much Is Never Enough" LP

These guys have been at it since the late '80s and it shows from the band photo. No offense, guys. I get called "sir" at the supermarket these days. This is the aging tough guy hardcore sound similar to what AGNOSTIC FRONT or RF7 is doing these days. I think these gents would be stoked on that comparison but, for me, the middle-aged bro shouts are really tired. The most interesting song for me is "Ailment," their take on addiction and recovery, where the vocal style and tempo vary a little. The rest fades into an OG, I-was-hardcore-before-you-were puddle of man piss. (RO)
(Know)

WARM NEEDLES – "Inconsolable" LP

Kinda sludgy dude rock from East Moriches, New York. There are a few glimmering moments here, but for the most part, this LP just screams "beer swillin' dudes." If it were played faster and the vocals had any sense of urgency whatsoever these guys could totally play alongside any number of those "fest only" type bands. (DZ)
(Chisel / Different Kitchen / Hectic Society / Tour Van)

WASTED TALENT – "Ready to Riot" LP

Reagan-era hardcore from State College, PA, that existed between late '81 and early '84, whose only output was a 1982 demo and a few comp tracks. It's good, straightforward 1-2-1-2 hardcore with swagger, earnesty, and melody that I'd compare to WASTED YOUTH or REBEL TRUTH, and it's clear that the RAMONES and early BLACK FLAG left their marks on a couple of mid-pacers on the demo. A lot of times, the guitar will play repetitive riffs while a more pronounced bass will do a separate melody, and while the sing-songy vocals may irritate some, I think they work. The lyrics generally deal with being a small town teenage punk and dealing with conformist bullshit in their terrible football town. Their main demo is included on the A-side, while the B-side is an earlier demo, a live set, and a couple of later basement tapes that get a bit darker and kinda creepy crawly at their slowest. The nicely-done poster insert includes a collection of flyers, photos, reviews of the demo (including Tim Yo's), comp inserts, a thorough if mildly condescending history of the band that explains the conservative context in which they existed, and even a *Philadelphia Inquirer* snippet about "hard-core punk" being a "creative force" that includes mention of a tape comp on which they appear. Definitely recommended for anyone with an interest in Pennsylvania punk history. If you want the original tape, they probably pop up at Double Decker here and there. (DG)
(Going Underground)

WORRIERS – "Imaginary Life" LP

I've heard this band described as "LISA LOEB with the ERGS as the backing band." LISA LOEB is Lauren from the the MEASURE (SA). And the backing band has only one former ERGS member. But no matter how you cut it, this record is super good. It bounces back and forth between '90s alternative rock radio and gritty pop punk. The songwriting is somehow both complex and yet super catchy. But perhaps most impressively, this album completely avoids every cliché normally associated with this style of music, and no place is this more apparent than the lyrics. While most singers of indie-pop-punk rely on broken relationships and personal inadequacy for 100% of their lyrics, Lauren picks from a diverse array of emotions to write out words that are as thoughtful as they are smart. If you go for the bookish, indie-pop-punk thing, this album is guaranteed to rule your world. (FS)
(Don Giovanni)

WOUNDED TOUNGE – "Our Children's Throats" EP

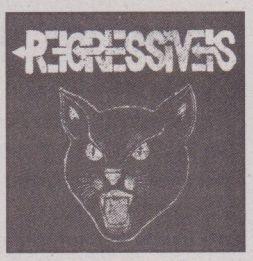
Whoa, man. This record is like if KING CRIMSON was all, "Hey man, we should totally be more like that band HIS HERO IS GONE, man." What the fuck? Progressive jazz crust that's actually hella good? Usually I would cringe at the thought, but this band is very sick. Heavy and driving crust with weird prog-rock time changes and dissonant breakdowns. Like a very angry YES. It's a one sided 12" with a cool etching of a de-fleshed face on the back. Awesome! (BA)
(Anti Corp / Burnt Bridges / Tick Tock)

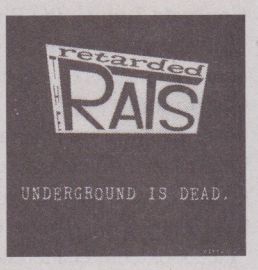
WRECK – "Leviathan" LP

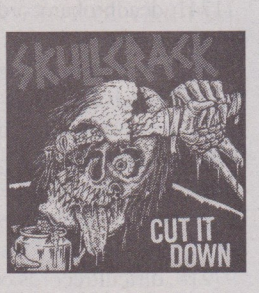
Ruthless dual vocals—one disturbed dystopian plebe leads the other. This German doom metal album might be a little too slow for me, but the poetry about Cthulhu-sized evil beasts in the abyss makes up for it. WRECK, for a moment, riff on BLACK SABBATH's *Electric Funeral* with some stunning eerie guitar effects, as if they were sick at sea in the great maw of Charybdis. This is basically screaming chant-y poetry of a performance piece nature. Get stoned. Get drowned. Amazing inky blot cover art of the nightmares beneath the waves. (JR)
(self-released)

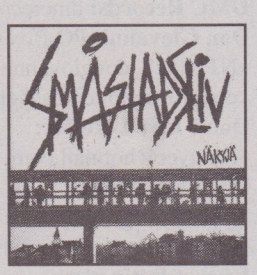
V/A – PLASTIC BOMB ZINE #91 CD

A load of mostly German bands I've never heard of that range from punk to HC to ska and some stuff in-between. There's the quick street-punk of ABFUKK (damn their riffs are so *tough* sounding!) and the pretty rad punk'n'roll/TURBONEGRO worship of Norway's SUICIDE BOMBERS (I'm sure I'm the only one at *MRR* who'll like this). We've got the shitty late-late-late-era NYHC/bro-rap of MOSCOW DEATH BRIGADE, the above par political poppy punk/ska of the FLEXFITZ (did I just write that?!?), the bar punk (err, *das bier hall* punk) of NORMAHL, and the OK-ish ska by way of the CLASH of BIG BANDERS. Wraps up with the cheesy metal vocals crossed with raw (?) pop punk of NO RESPITE but then there's rather good mix of grind and raw hardcore of KELLASSEIN. Evidentially, the thing is with these comps is that it's more quantity than quality. Comes free with the *Plastic Bomb* zine issue reviewed elsewhere in this fine punk publication. (JD)
(Plastic Bomb)









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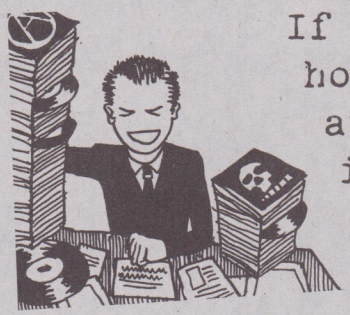

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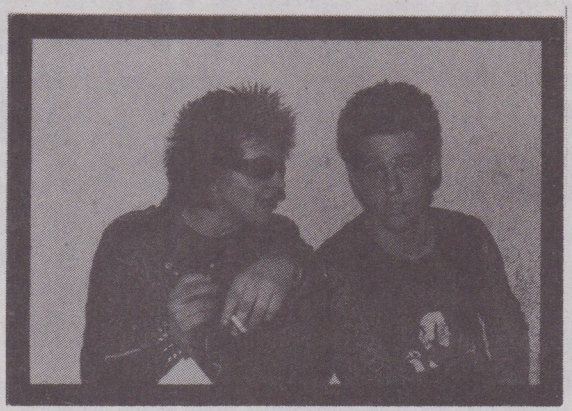

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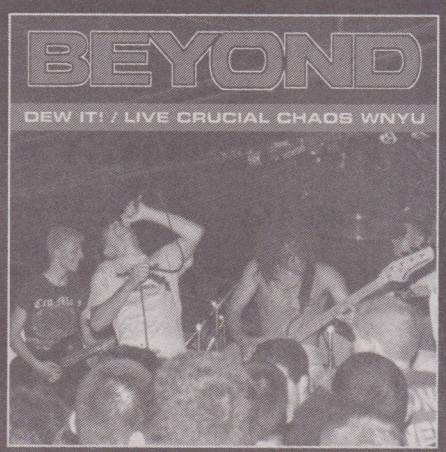

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DEMOS

Send cassettes and CD-Rs to: MRR Attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. CD-Rs with no artwork will not be considered. Reviews by Heather Blotto, Robert Collins, Greg Harvester, Sean Nieves-Quiñones, Jason Ryan, Michael de Toffoli, and Andrew Underwood.

ATAQUE DE RABIA – Pogo mess from a Texas attic chest, dusty young jams for the rubber room. This tape has damn fine artwork and lettering. Short, fast, and striking with lyrics so warped you worry about the band when they are gone. This brain-damaging pogo style is way too popular right now but ATAQUE DE RABIA seem to be the Carol Anne in the TV for me, so I'll let it go. I would not recommend listening to this behind the wheel (like there's actually a tape deck in your car). For seething rabid geeks for RUDIMENTARY PENI and GISM. (Jason) (6-song cassette, English/Spanish lyrics included, ataquederabia.bandcamp.com)

ATRAMENT – *Demo MMIV* – Two terminating rippers from beyond the grave with heavy Swedish death metal and '90s D-beat crust influences. The sophistication of this is way beyond your favorite new demo. These two songs are hurricanes compared to a windy day. Metal punk D-beat as fuck mastered by Oakland's Earhammer Studios. Members of NECROT, VASTUM, BLACK SEPTEMBER, etc. Feel the scorching vocals and guitars; seek shelter from the bass bombardment and snare annihilation. Do you fuck with hopeless punk and total death? Get this before it's gone. (Jason) (2-song cassette, lyrics included, sentientruin.blogspot.com)

BAZZ – *Destroy Poserton* – I coined the term "garage hardcore" a few years ago (I may not have been the first, obviously), but I feel like these monkeys are making me step my game up. So this is "Garage Noise Punk": weird ass lo-fi chaos that lands well within the confines of blown-out pogo punk. BAZZ crank out defiant and feisty tunes that will sell you with their inane lyrics and seal the deal with their songs. I love this, even if I don't know why. (Robert) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, lifeisposerton.bandcamp.com)

CHACHI ON ACID – Apparently CHACHI ON ACID is still a band. They've been around since 1991 (?) and I've never paid attention. On this release, they play shambolic pop punk and some ill-informed, tame stabs at hardcore. Some of these songs sound like they were written in five drunken minutes, in a bad way. If you can't think of a vocal melody, don't just follow the guitar. Shit-punk. (Greg) (13-song CD, lyrics not included, chachionacid.bandcamp.com)

CHONDRIA – Look, if you're gonna start a band with members of CURMUDGEON, SORROWS and ZOMBIE DOGS, it's probably gonna be good, right? Right. This is good. Simple, to the point hardcore with smart, direct lyrics about modern colonization, feeling lost and other shit that is so vague that I can't even begin to tell you what it's about…but I bet it's good. A welcome addition to the often idiotic and inept world of hardcore. Raw, pissed off, punk. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, chondria.bandcamp.com, chondriapunx@gmail.com)

COCOONITUDE – The best parts of this tape are the dirty, slow songs that sound like garage rock played at the wrong speed (too slow). Infectious 1-4-5 chord progressions and jangly guitar lie just below the surface, buried beneath a fuzzed-out layer of distortion. The drumming on some tracks really stands out because it's direct and straightforward in a way that drummers too often undervalue, but also gets unconventional without losing the momentum. (Heather) (10-song tape, lyrics not included, ghostorchardrecords.bandcamp.com)

CONFLICTING IDEA – Noisy, crushing feedback and audio collage-laden hardcore/raw-punk. Not super goony. I can hear some slight influence of REPULSION's *Horrified*, minus the blast beats. The first song on this tape, "Crooked Beak of Heaven," is named after one of four man-eating birds, companions to a giant known to the Hamatsa society of the Kwakwaka'wakw people of the region now known as British Columbia, Canada. It pretty much sounds like the soundtrack to walking into the giant's house while he is out, waiting for him to get home and then trapping him in a hole and killing him with hot rocks. Are these dudes indigenous? It'd be cool if they were. (Sean) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, conflictingideas@gmail.com, 411 Edmonton Trail NE Calgary, AB T2E 355 CANADA)

CROSS CLASS – *Minimum Rage* – Eight songs in under seven minutes, with about 60 seconds dedicated to a noisy intro and outro. CROSS CLASS practically drag you through this cassette almost tripping over themselves to get to the next song, bleeding into each other in one breath. Once it starts it hits hard, very fuzzy and very distorted but they're cleanly tight with each other. The vocals actually cut through the mix really well, and he sounds absolutely ferocious. He's barking but it's calculated and honed, yelling his words but definitely in control. They sound less like they're playing a collection of songs and more like a blitz of power with moments of rearing back and launching back into the momentum. They got their heads right, their energy right, and they exploded onto this tape. (De Toffoli) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, cxc.sac@gmail.com, crossclass.bandcamp.com)

DEATHWISH – *Out for Blood* – Dark rock'n'roll punk for the bitter punk rock adults. Riffs with the excitement of Black Sabbath and the care of Motörhead, strained out and pulling you down the drain. All the grease and choking smoke of INEPSY but basically grouchier with vocals that crack like a whip. The ease with which this tape locomotives along is also easy to take for granted, but as you focus on each element there are subtle stinging drum licks, guitars that move like bass, and a bass that tears through a field of rubble like a guitar. The vocals and clear and tough. This is the documented essence of old school urban hardcore punk unity: reminiscing both the good times and the bad. (Jason) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, osdpress.wordpress.com)

DOCTOR NOD – Two tracks on this cassingle: one is a laid back, tripped-out psychedelic jam with fluttery falsetto vocals and some organ thrown in to spice it up or nail down the retro sound. You know the way bass players sometimes do that thing with their neck where they dance just a little by moving only their head forward and backward? Anyway, the other track is a slightly less laid back, less tripped-out nod to VELVET UNDERGROUND or IGGY POP style rock'n'roll. Definitely well executed and a little hypnotic for all your more-stoned moments, but not so much a punk record if that's what you were looking for. (Heather) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, drnod.bandcamp.com)

EFIALTIS – New, rudimentary and raw punk/hardcore from London that sometimes reminds me of a less explosive LAS OTRAS, except that the lyrics are sung in Greek instead of Spanish. Insistent and urgent, but not cracking you over the head with speed and intensity. There's a

layer of reverb thrown over the vocals that helps fill out the sound and makes it feel darker than it might be in a live setting. Excellent demo and I'm looking forward to the future of this band. (Greg) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, efialtis.bandcamp.com)

FLESH MOTHER – FLESH MOTHER rolls over you like a slow-moving bulldozer, annihilating all flora and fauna in its path. Each riff takes on the expanse of the Grand Canyon and the snare hits like Thor punching the fucking Earth. If the guttural voice of this singer is even halfway intact after a show, it's a goddamn miracle. Huge, huge, "fuck you" riffs and one giant bad mood. (Greg) (6-song CD-R, lyrics included, fleshmother.bandcamp.com)

FUCK SS – *Demo SS* – This has been billed as Japanese noise-punk worship, but that's really only part of the story. Certainly there is noise in the mix, and the bouncier bass lines are in the GAI/SWANKYS vein, but there are equal parts straight ahead US hardcore and FLIPPER-esque sludge in the mix as well. The sing-song-y vocals are definitely a highlight; the singer has a bored/offhand almost spoken style that works perfectly, giving extra oomph to the occasional screams and giving the whole recording a sense of character it might otherwise lack. I also love the drums here, they hang a bit back in the mix but the drummer hits hella hard and really drives the band. The big toms sound huge when they show up. The stomping, repetitive "Social Real Estate" is the pick of the litter, but there's not a dud in the bunch. FUCK SS are definitely a band to keep an eye on, and this is one of the better demos I've heard this year. (AU) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, worldgonemad.bigcartel.com, fuckss.bandcamp.com)

THE GRUBS – *Dirty Love* – It's 2015 and I have a hard time listening to men complain about their shitty relationship problems through pop punk. I'm not going into that one...just read up on some basic feminism for reference. Overall, this release reminds me of the mid '90s East Coast pop punk scene. Whoa-ohs, songs about women, single-string guitar solos and bratty-sounding vocals. Make your choice. (Greg) (5-song CD-R, lyrics included, thegrubs.bandcamp.com)

INCENDIAIRE – *Fosse Commune* – Aggressive mid-tempo punk from Bordeaux, France that comes with a cool hand-drawn and cut/paste tape insert and lyric sheet. The coolest thing about this is that it is super blown out and noisy—there's a ton of highly distorted, grating treble noise, likely attributable to someone's guitar. The vocals have a lot of echo, which adds some drama and just makes the band sound impossibly large. There's also a cool slow anger/frustration jam on here complete with a wide array of echo-y grunts and groans. The lyrics are sung in French, and are political in an abstract way. (Heather) (8-song cassette, lyrics included)

KULTURKAMPF – *What Remains* – Very '90s sounding political crust/punk. Fast as shit when they wanna be, with ominous slow bits. Negatives are generic riffing and a weird recording that highlights the drums way too much; positives are smart lyrics and that same weird recording that makes the band sound heavy and unconventional. (Robert) (12-song CD-R, lyrics included, kulturkampfpunk@hotmail.com)

L'ETAT C'EST MOI – *Born Without Consent* – After an opening track that makes me think I'm listening to the second coming of INEPSY and the second that makes me think I just got an advance of the new LEFTOVER CRACK, suffice to say that I'm confused. But song after song, these Montreal creamers keep delivering, and everything is killer…crust'n'roll, catchy punk, in your face politics, gang vocals? It's all here, and it's all fukkn good too. Those first two impressions are still spot-on, so if you can paint a bridge between those two acts and have an anarchist circle pit in the middle…? I'm just saying. "The Master's Friends" is my choice track, but feel free to choose your own. (6-song CDr, lyrics included, lecm.bandcamp.com)

LOVE CANAL – *Enter the Love Canal* – This record is heavy. Brutal as hell, moving from thick and murky to blasting hardcore. The guitars and bass are very overdriven which stews that muddy tone but they shake the dirt off with their speed when the drums cleanly pierce through. What really stands out about this band is the vocals which are *drenched* in reverb, sounding like he's yelling from the bottom of a well. It gives it a very atmospheric tint, almost reminiscent of black metal. It's fast and urgent, but with 1-2-1-2 hardcore drums instead of blastbeats. This group is really onto something, discovering a way to be atmospheric without being washy, heavy without being brutish, and powerful without being pöwërfül. It's very punx to hate labeling genres so let's not call it "blackcore," but this band will effectively appeal to punks, metalheads, or black metal…ers(?) without alienating any side. (De Toffoli) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, blackdotsbuffalo.bandcamp.com)

MANAGER – Nihilistic noise rock sounds from the school of NOMEANSNO, the JESUS LIZARD or the more modern HOT WHITE. The guitar is sleazy, effected and gross, like an old leering man at the bus stop. The bass and drums provide a heavy and thick foundation for that old man to sink into and fester, like a sonic swamp of sadness, or bog of eternal stench. From what I can decode of the throat-shredding vocals, the lyrics paint a picture of a hopeless, bleak and desperate existence. (Sean) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, 730 Oxford St East, London ON N5V 3J6, Canada)

MODERN PROBLEMS – *Identity* – Clearly veterans who have been doing this for a while and have their chops down (members of DEAD HEARTS / MALFUNCTION / EVERY TIME I DIED). You can hear the Bay Area influence of RANCID or MONSTER SQUAD. Very melodic and impressive bass lines under pick-slidin' guitars and a drummer who is fucking on point. The vocals are very clear and clean, definitely a well-seasoned and healthy voice that isn't sputtering or hoarse. All very professional recordings. (What do you expect when the Dolby Digital logo is on the jacket sleeve? So punx.) "Fight" is about thugs who terrorize shows, "Dying On the Vine" is about smack heads and the punk rockers who shoot up just to be edgy. They're passing down their wisdom in a truthful, genuine way and they definitely deserve respect for that. (De Toffoli) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, modernproblems.bandcamp.com)

MUDSEX – Drunken, degenerate, wild, DUI-style punk from Dalton, GA and Chattanooga, TN. With no lyric sheet (thankfully) and song titles like "Sex Offender Blues," "It's Not the Herpes I'm Afraid Of (It's the Commitment)" and "Whiskey Dick All Over Town," you can be sure that the lyrics fall into the camp of "Did I piss you off yet? Aren't you offended?" It sounds like it was recorded in a garbage can. You can take that positively or negatively. Members of QUEERWULF, HELLSTOMPER, REAGAN CONCENTRATION CAMP and TWAT SAUCE. (Greg) (8 song CD-R, lyrics not included, 819 Hamilton Ave, Chattanooga, TN 37405)

MULCT – *Pressure* – Slow parts slow, fast parts blast, you know the formula already and MULCT take it to the extreme. Vocals sound restrained even in their intensity, almost like they need a touch of that trademark pv high shriek, but their blustering fullness is still quite satisfying. Guitars are ugly as sin (intentional), and the songs dance between bitter reality and comedic irreverence. (Robert) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, Knochen Tapes, Primelweg 7, 32657 Lemgo GERMANY, knochentapes.blogspot.com)

ORENTHAL – ORENTHAL is a male-fronted melodic hardcore band from Buffalo, NY. Pieces of their songs remind me of *How to Clean Everything*-era PROPAGANDHI…. like they stuff blazing, million-note guitar leads into small hooks that sound pretty cool. The vocals range from straight-up gruff to melodic, but sometimes the melody doesn't always reach the mark. They tread into some chugga chugga territory that almost flirts with nu-metal,

but doesn't quite "go there." There's a good momentum throughout. (Greg) (3-song CD-R, lyrics not included, richard@insidiousindustries.com)

POSTMAN – POSTMAN is a surprisingly creative band producing very open-minded music. This demo plays out like classic hardcore in terms of the driving fuzz-crunch bass and steady aggressive drums, but the guitar sears on top like an exposed wire. Actually the first song is appropriately titled "Wire," and reminds me of *Chairs Missing*. The bass and drums are consistent and rarely stray while the guitar swings over the melody and sometimes catches so that all three power forward together. Very punk vocals, yelling monotone words as if he's reading out of his journal rather than focusing on trying to make it melodic. The songs drive almost to the point of droning and the last track, "Tear Down / Bad Streak," is a little over six minutes and feels like three songs that are pulled together as if their racing heartbeat gave them a second wind to crash into the next piece. You can really feel the adrenaline but they give you time to breathe rather than just reeling from the impacts. (De Toffoli) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, rallenrenovations@gmail.com, postmanband.bandcamp.com)

SATANIC MALFUNCTIONS – *This Time It's Personal* – Apparently, there are three different versions / factions of this band. I wonder if they're all this bad. This whole thing sounds like a '90s digital recording catastrophe. Flangers on everything. A total wash of cymbals. Trite anarcho-babble as lyrics. The singer is barely audible on most tracks and he seems like he's yelling the lyrics with no thought of how they will fit into the songs. Punishing anarcho-grind with the treble set to ten. (Greg) (14-song CD-R, lyrics included, satanicmalfunctionsofficial@gmail.com)

SCHIZOPHASIA – *5000* – Dude, this band is weird as shit. SUICIDE paced anti-Nazi missives that fall somewhere between THROBBING GRISTLE's *Second Annual Report* and getting stranded on Jupiter. Every release is a new experience with these Canadians—and this experience was a good one. If you like your boundaries pushed.... (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, brainswell.bigcartel.com)

SHARK SANDWICH – This tape came with a note saying that SHARK SANDWICH was a recording side project of a few friends one summer when everyone was home from college, and then their friends found the master tapes and secretly released it (calling it Corn Dog Records). The band referred to it as a "happy little bootleg." What they've come up with is interesting thrash that moves between heavy and blitzing, up and down. The vocals are fascinating, sounding like a 33 record being played at 45. (I kept forgetting that I was listening to a cassette and feeling like I needed to double check that it wasn't on the wrong speed.) Inexplicably fast but they still manage to start and stop on a dime. I'm a sucker for loops so I was cooing to their very atmospheric sounds in between: church bells, monologues, and ending with a kind of funny back-and-forth about if they're done and the album is over or not. This recording sounds like a few friends with pent up anticipated inspiration creating in their garage, finally on summer vacation. This is Corn Dog Records #000 and I'm glad it was brought to light. (De Toffoli) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, corndogclub.storenvy.com)

SHUT UP, STUPID – Sincere, no-bullshit punk from Sacramento, CA. The un-self-consciousness of the sound makes me think of early '80s LA punk bands that didn't necessarily know how they meant to sound but knew how ugly they felt inside and just kind of allowed it to come out. Among other shorter, angrier songs, the track "Shut Up, Stupid" dramatizes the experience of walking out the front door into a world of judgment and rejection. The dissonance is thick. You can almost feel your stupid-looking shorts sticking to your legs with sweat on a too-hot day while you're walking on the sidewalk trying to go nowhere and getting berated by the anonymous aggressor. Am I maybe making a leap to assume that the song is meant to be understood from the perspective of the target of the insults? The sound is saturated with a kind of disgust I can only associate with self-loathing, a substance too bitter to ethically sling at others. But maybe I'm just nice. (Heather) (6-song tape, lyrics not included)

SKIP JENSEN – A few Montreal garage punkers put this slop together and it doesn't sound half-bad. More rock'n'roll than anything, these guys an energy similar to STEEL WOOL, *Every Good Boy Deserves Fudge*-era MUDHONEY, FLAT DUO JETS and even some REVEREND HORTON HEAT without being so fucking hokey. The first song, "My Host," is deceptive...throwing out some of the hooks and speed of the BANANAS, before settling into a straight-up garage rock release. Good trick. Still, an engaging and honestly solid release. (Greg) (12 song CD-R, lyrics not included, skipjensen.bandcamp.com)

SLENDER – This shit is completely and totally inept. There's some synth in there somewhere. It sounds like they're just learning how to use it. Some fucking jerkwad is barely hanging onto a beat while hitting a briefcase or something. There's an out of tune guitar. Some samples pop up in the middle of songs in a completely different volume. The whole thing sounds like it was recorded on a Walkman. For the most part, it's kind of like an engaging field recording of idiotic fuckheads huffing glue, but other parts will be a test of your patience (acapella rendition of "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" anyone?). Someone said this is members of CRAZY SPIRIT. People say lots of things. (Greg) (??-song cassette, lyrics not included, papertowncompany.bigcartel.com)

SNAGGLETOOTH – Impossible to not give respect to the packaging, as I was beyond intrigued (enthralled, perhaps?) before I even saw the cassette. Killer arts, wrapped like it's my birthday, wax seal, full insert...the whole damn presentation is excellent. The contents are what's important though...right? Jangly '90s emo with an oddly discordant cello that helps you realize that it isn't 1997...I feel like this is a time machine presented in cassette form, because I didn't think these bands existed in 2015. Apparently they do, and I'm glad they do. And they are from California to boot. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, snaggletoothpunk.bandcamp.com)

SPAM JAVELIN – Screamy, basic hardcore from North Wales. Beefy guitars. Dude yelling his head off. No hooks. (Greg) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, spamjavelin.bandcamp.com)

STENCH CONSULTANTS – *Nonsense Revisited* – Yes! Hardly any of these songs are over 45 seconds! Shit-fi hardcore with "weird" parts thrown in so that you don't get bored in the half-minute it takes to listen to each song. The singer sounds like that guy from CAPITALIST CASUALTIES. Feedback that will pierce your stupid fucking skull. A total disdain for social capital. Hooray! "You wax poetic. I wax pathetic." (Greg) (10-song CD-R, lyrics included, stenchconsultants.bandcamp.com)

STRUTTER – Grade-A raw punk/goon-core. My speakers were practically dripping tucked-in shirts, Docs and trench coats as soon as I hit play! The letter that came with the tape reports that members of GLUE, BLOTTER and DETESTADOS, etcetera play on this recording, so if you are stoked on those bands, you would definitely dig on this. Be careful not to get your dangly ripped out while moshing! (Sean) (7-song cassette, $8 ppd, 807 Chicon St, Austin, TX 78702, lyrics included, thisisaustin.notthatgreat@gmail.com)

SUCIA – Oh yeah! Raw, pissed off, USHC-type shit from NYC sung entirely in Spanish. There are some REAGAN YOUTH-style guitar leads thrown in that doesn't feel flashy or shitty. There's nothing entirely original about this but they tingle that feeling in the back of your brain that lets you know there's something special going on here. Solid and worth the ten minutes it takes to listen. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, 538 Johnson Ave. #203, Brooklyn, NY 11237, papertowncompany.bigcartel.com)

SYMPTOM – Hole-ee shit. I just saw this band decimate an already crumbling village in Central Valley, CA with their insane wall of pulverizing noise. I am so glad this band, all the way from Boston, was put on the All Punks Go For It bill at the last minute, because they completely destroyed.This tape, which is a combination of their demo and the forthcoming EP, is absolutely essential if you're into a skull racket such as ZYANOSE, D-CLONE, GLOOM and I'll even take it back to blistering assaults coming out of HAIL OF RAGE, DEFORMED CONSCIENCE and family from Torrington, CT. Riffs right up the spine, nuclear flash stops in the face, UK '82 anarcho bass lines out of nowhere… The intense speed of this three-piece is unfuckwithable when it comes to D-beat bestial hardcore and you simply must have it. Check out the videos I got of SYMPTOM from said fest at youtube.com/imsocietysjason. Check out their drummer. Insane. Yeah, there's a GAUZE cover. 16/100. (Jason) (10-song cassette, punkisacult.bandcamp.com)

TENSIÓN – Holy shit, this is great! 100% punk rock from Spain with catchy tunes, brilliantly simple leads, forceful vocals and a melancholy feeling that adds a bit of a CRISIS edge to the proceedings. This is a fully formed band right off the bat, as TENSIÓN pull off the near-impossible feat of playing super-simple punk in an incredibly memorable way. Songs like the ultimate sing-along "Tensión," the speedy "Víbora" with its motor-mouthed vocal and the RUDIMENTARY PENI-tinged "Solos" sound like the work of a band that's been around for years, if not decades, all wrapped up in a punk-as-fuck cut and paste package that includes lyrics in both Spanish and English. Recommended for fans of everything from ÚLTIMO RESORTE to the recent NARCOESTADO demo. (AU) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, worldgonemad.bigcartel.com, tension_punk@hotmail.com)

THE SYNDROME – Pretty ripping melodic hardcore that recalls the speed of MINOR THREAT combined with the mosh parts of Boston's IN MY EYES, or even earlier RISE AGAINST. Reminds me of scores of nameless touring bands bands that would tear up the local Eagle's Lodge or whatever when I was eighteen. Not sure why the songs seem to explode for a second when they start and then the volume rolls off almost immediately, perhaps an issue with the duplication? Hey, there's a WIPERS cover. (Sean) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, 730 Oxford St East, London, ON N5V 3J6, CANADA)

THING SLOTH – Fairly basic, straightforward punk rock from North Carolina. There's so much cymbal hiss / wash in this recording that it's hard to listen to. Maybe that's too picky, but it's also true. Vocals are scream-y and out of tune…a little bit of a Jello vibe but not as bratty. They cover JFA, OVERKILL *and* the MOTARDS. (Greg) (14-song CD-R, lyrics not included, facebook.com/thingsloth)

UNREAL THOUGHT – *Amateur Comfort* – This tape plays with some very familiar darkwave and post-punk musical ideas, but mixes them up in a way that is a little tougher than either genre. The sound successfully evokes a sense of hopeless desolation (that's the point with darkwave, right?) backed up with dance-y drum beats. The second track, "Meaningless Stare," is definitely a mid-tempo dance hit, with a pretty, melodic intro and vocals that remind me of that early '80s Los Angeles punk dysphoric talk-singing. If you live somewhere where it rains, this seems like a good tape to walk around in the rain with while feeling totally alienated by society. It will put a little spring in your step. But it would be cool to see this band take more risks, or dial up the anger to balance out all that apathy. (Heather) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, unrealthought.bandcamp.com, variousrecords.blogspot.ca)

URSULA – I've been hearing this name a lot since the spring, so I was amped to see their tape in the demo box! This is urgent anthemic post-punk that feels like riding in the sidecar of an out of control motorcycle operated by a character from Mario Kart inside a wind tunnel. Cool fuzzy bass! Guitars that change from melodic to discordant at the drop of a hat! Unexpected stops and starts! What sounds like doubled guitar in the intro of "Spit" blends into a hypnotic almost saxophone-like timbre. The songs aren't all played at a rapid seat-of-your-pants tempo. "Grieve" is a slower-paced, heavy FLIPPER-esque track that is crushing and powerful. The vocals are really distinct and confidently drive the music, somewhat reminiscent of ESSENTIAL LOGIC's frontwoman Lora Logic. (Sean) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, ursulamtl.bandcamp.com, 5992 Saint-Urbain, Montreal, QC H2T 2X5, CANADA

WOODFIN – I know this is unfair, but I don't really like post-hardcore…but when it's done by people who have *been around for a while*, I have a little more patience. I'm definitely hearing some '90s Dischord vibes going on here... maybe both EMBRACE (okay…'80s) and LUNGFISH, but less drawn out. More direct. Fuzzed-out bass lays down some groundwork for some wet-noodle style guitar work and plaintive vocals. Some well-placed samples within the songs really bring that '90s feeling home, but I am not complaining. Good demo. Members of PEZZ, THE DAY IS DONE, COPOUT and JOEY MULLINIX CRAP EXPLOSION. (Greg) (5-song CD-R, lyrics included, woodfin.bandcamp.com, woodfinband@gmail.com)

V/A – *Fast/Violence Part Two* – Just like the title suggests, you're looking at a ripping collection of fastcore, powerviolence and general demonstrations of ripping hardcore. Quality level is mid-range to high, and there are enough tracks here that something is going to toot your horn—my choice is MANGLE. (Robert) (35-song cassette, lyrics not included, Knochen Tapes, Primelweg 7, 32657 Lemgo GERMANY, knochentapes.blogspot.com)

V/A – *Hairy Palm Vol. 1: A New Zealand Hardcore Punk Compilation* – This is a snapshot of the NZ punk scene from late 2014 to earlier this year. There are a ton of bands, and sometimes it's kind of hard to catch where one band's contributions ends and another starts, but I'll mention the highlights! BONECRUNCHER from Wellington play D-beat/crust and remind me of THULSA DOOM (or even NAUSEA) with their traded off vocals or the more straight-forward HC output of the SPITZ of Sydney, AUS. PARENTS play the screamo short and sweet, Auckland style. MARKDOWN, also of Auckland, is blazing '80s style HC in the vein of DEEP WOUND. Auckland's SLAVEDRIVER slam out two nuclear-blasts of powerviolence. Hamilton's WIZZ KIDS play WIPERS punk. MACHINA REX of Dunedin are the heaviest neocrust. As for the rest, it looks like there's a lot of grindcore coming out of NZ, which is cool, but is hard for me to listen to a lot of it back to back. The insert doesn't have any lyrics, but includes short write-ups of each band, other projects members are involved with and each band's respective streaming music website. Compilations can be tough cuz not every track can be a hit, but I hope people keep putting out documents like these of their local scenes. (Sean) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, symphoniesofslackness@gmail.com, 530 New North Road Kingsland, Auckland NEW ZEALAND)

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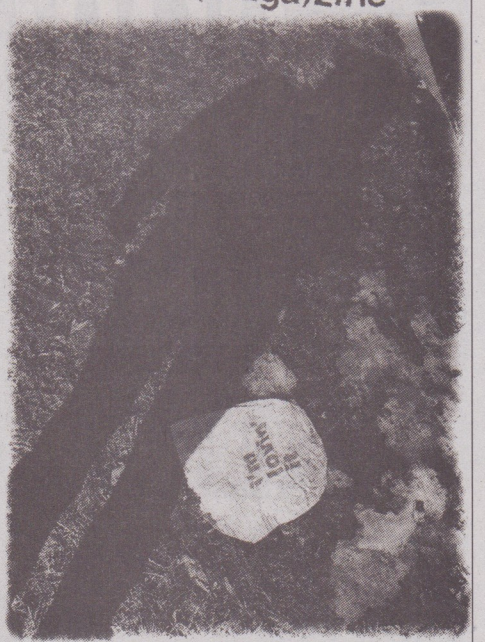

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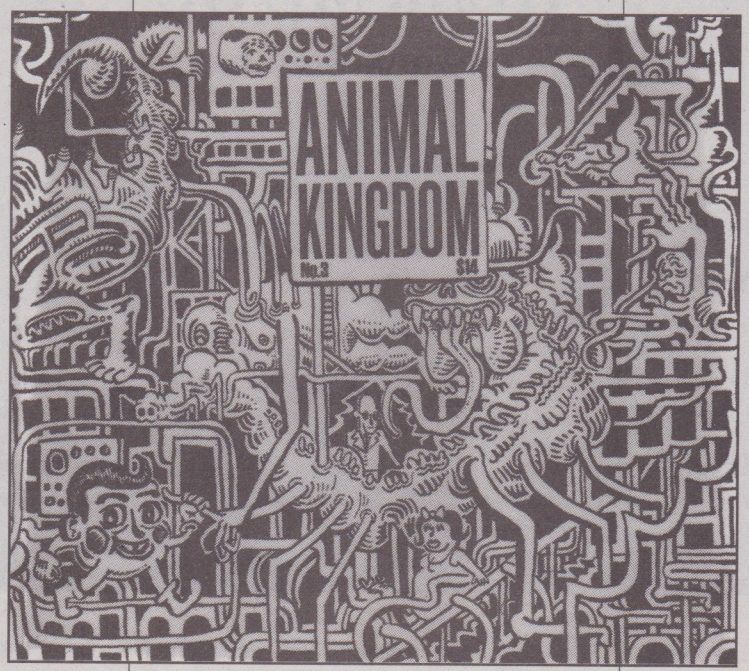
AB #18
16 pgs

This is almost pure text save for a few technical drawings, not even a cover or an explanation or anything really. It starts off with maybe what is a how to about building a "zabode" (some kind of water born dwelling?) then moves into living in a motorhome (or maybe a farm?), tips on how to go shopping if you live rurally without a car, discussions of ways to deal with cops and different diets that are based on evolutionary theory before ending somewhere with a discussion of the differences between us, Homo Erectus and Australopithecus. At points it seems like a normal zine ramble and then suddenly is maybe a book review but then also it's maybe finding things written on town bulletin boards and then critiques of said writing? It's fascinating but I kind of have no clue what's going on. It's great. This is somehow connected to the long-running zine *Dwelling Portably*, not totally sure in what way. Very good. (MM)
Lisa Ahne, PO Box 181, Alsea, OR 97324



ANIMAL KINGDOM #3
$14 / 100 pgs

Animal Kingdom is full as fuck. It's jammed with noir inky comics, fiction, and critical writing. A real bargain of a mag. My personal favorite article in this issue is about Jack Spicer and aliens. The rest is about sex and pain. I feel like these things are relative to your experience whether you want to admit it or not. I fucking see you. (EC)
animalkingdompublishing.com / animalkingdompublishing@gmail.com

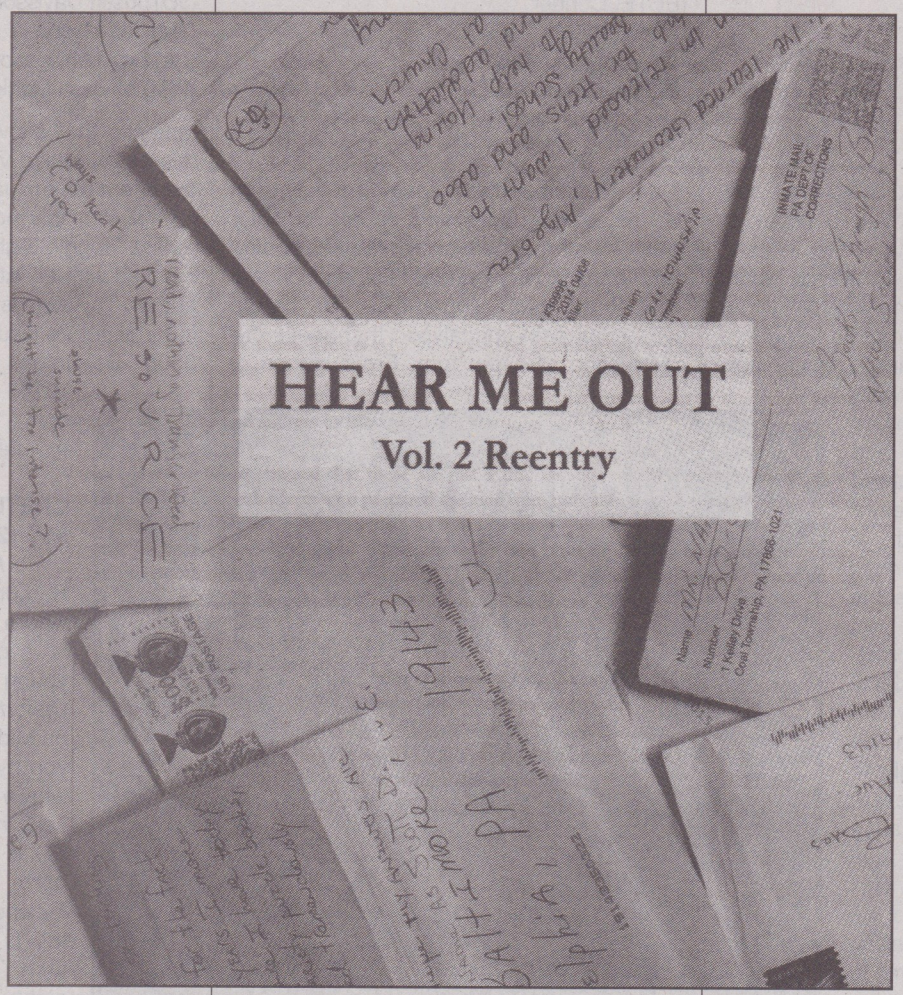
ARKDUST #2
35 pgs

Six sci-fi stories that speak the ugly truth of colonized queers and people of color today—we are otherwordly refugees finding our means of survival and resistance in and against the white supremacist cis hetero cyberpunk post-apocalypse that seeks our destruction at every turn. From stories of government mandated straight white man-bots being inserted into your beautiful brown crystal-punk house, to transgender superheroines being hunted by old allies in a *Days Of Future Past*-type scenario, Alex Smith weaves together elegant patchwork visions of alternate worlds that are as high-tech as they are dirty and tarnished, as full of trauma as they are triumph. Smith creates settings that are familiar enough into which people of color who are punk, or punk-by-association, can believably project ourselves, yet with an edge of the fantastic that allows us to imagine (I say this as an active verb) our many histories, experiences, sexualities and genders even further, from this moment in time into a future reality. Maggie Eighteen drops a guest story coupled with an interview conducted by the author. This zine is so necessary. Count me in for all future issues. (SN)
5008 Beaumont Ave Philadelphia, PA 19143 / theyarebirds@gmail.com / metropolarity.net / theafterv3rse.tumblr.com

CRETINS OF DISTORTION #7
$5 / 12 pgs

MRR's own Emmy Ramone imagines a world where *Cleveland Confidential* is required listening for all young punks. *Cretins of Distortion* is a fanzine focused on Midwest punk and I know all you hype-lords just figured out where Indiana is on a map, but keep moving east, cause O-H-I-O is the name of the game here. This is an absolutely indispensible resource for all things Ohio punk now and then. The bulk of the zine are eighty or so write-ups of bands from the Buckeye punk past. Of course, there's Devo and the almighty eels, Pere Ubu, etc—no issue on Ohio punk would be complete without them—but there's also talk about the incredible Lepers 45 and Vertical Slit and a whole host of bands I've never heard before, but will be mining the archive here to listen to ASAP. How did Ohio end up producing all of the greatest American music? What the fuck was (is?) going on there? This zine provides some perspective. I'm extraordinarily grateful to Emmy for this document. As punks, we need to record our own history and, as pointed out in the introduction, we're lucky that as a

movement, we're archivally young. It means the people who were there are frequently still around to talk to us! Become a punk historian yourself, interview the people who made your city what it is—Emmy ended up in the same room with Mike Rep and Ron House at the same time! This zine strikes the perfect balance—interested in history while still celebrating what is going on in the present (there's a grip of reviews of current Ohio bands, alongside the historical heavies). Interview your friends' bands, even the ones who just make demo tapes! Save your flyers and fanzines! Engage with your history with passion and curiosity. Death to historical reenactments. This is an extraordinarily readable, personable, and useful resource for anyone interested in the history of marginal music in this country. It looks great—and punk!— to boot, oversized pages full of flyer and fanzine clippings. And thank fuck, the word D-beat never appears. (GA)
bugcartel.storenvy.com / 2656 Dayton Ave, Columbus, OH 43202



DEGENERATE #16.5
Free with other issues or upon request, free to prisoners / 10 pgs

This installment in miniature of this East Bay fanzine is all about the Texas band Institute and their newest record, *Catharsis*. In the course of reading it, they've changed from a band I wanted to like into a band I want to listen to more. Similarly to the most recent full issue of *Degenerate*, a lot of this is strung together from reviews and write-ups from other publications. The zine is a longish essay attempting to understand why this band—self-aware young men in the mid twenty-teens—trades in the clichés it does. Who needs more songs about your exhausted miserablism? What's up with the *heavy* borrowing from Crisis? (*Degenerate* reprints a page from the *Distort* issue on Crisis—itself a reprint of a contemporary interview—as if to underscore the point.) What's the deal with Institute? There's no real answer, but now I have a reason to go back and dig that last record with more of a personal stake in Moses Brown's dry-heaving delivery.

This issue is subtitled "Debased God," alluding to both the author's exploration of "performative debasement" and Berkeley's very own Based God, rapper Lil B. One of my colleagues pointed out that he never actually explains what "performative debasement" *means*. I guess it suits this zine's abstract style to paint its definition around the edges. What's being debased? The performer, twisted and debauched through the expulsion? The clichés of punk performance themselves, devalued and cheapened in repetition? I wish I could engage more, but without a definition it's a little too vague to know which thread to pull. If I had to venture a guess, I'd probably end up looping in The Based God: a negative outpouring like this record is like the other side of the coin to Lil B's "based and positive" body of work. Both are uncapped expulsions of feeling, earnestly reveling in and revealing the absurdity of genre clichés, with flow and content driven by the agony and ecstasy of expression itself. I'd considered talking about Freud and "anal expulsiveness" in this context, but *Degenerate* already loops Aristotle in, one dead white man too many as it is.

Anyway, it's all about the music. While the writing is certainly brainy and analytical, it doesn't fall into the tonal trap of scholarly remove. It still feels personal. This zine is cut up into a 5"x5.5" package and dropped into a plastic sleeve. I kind of wish it came with a CD-R of Institute's last couple records. It'd be a cool present, burning their album along with this thank-you card of sorts. Into it. (EW)
P.O. Box 3272, Berkeley, CA 94703 / degenerateephemera.tumblr.com

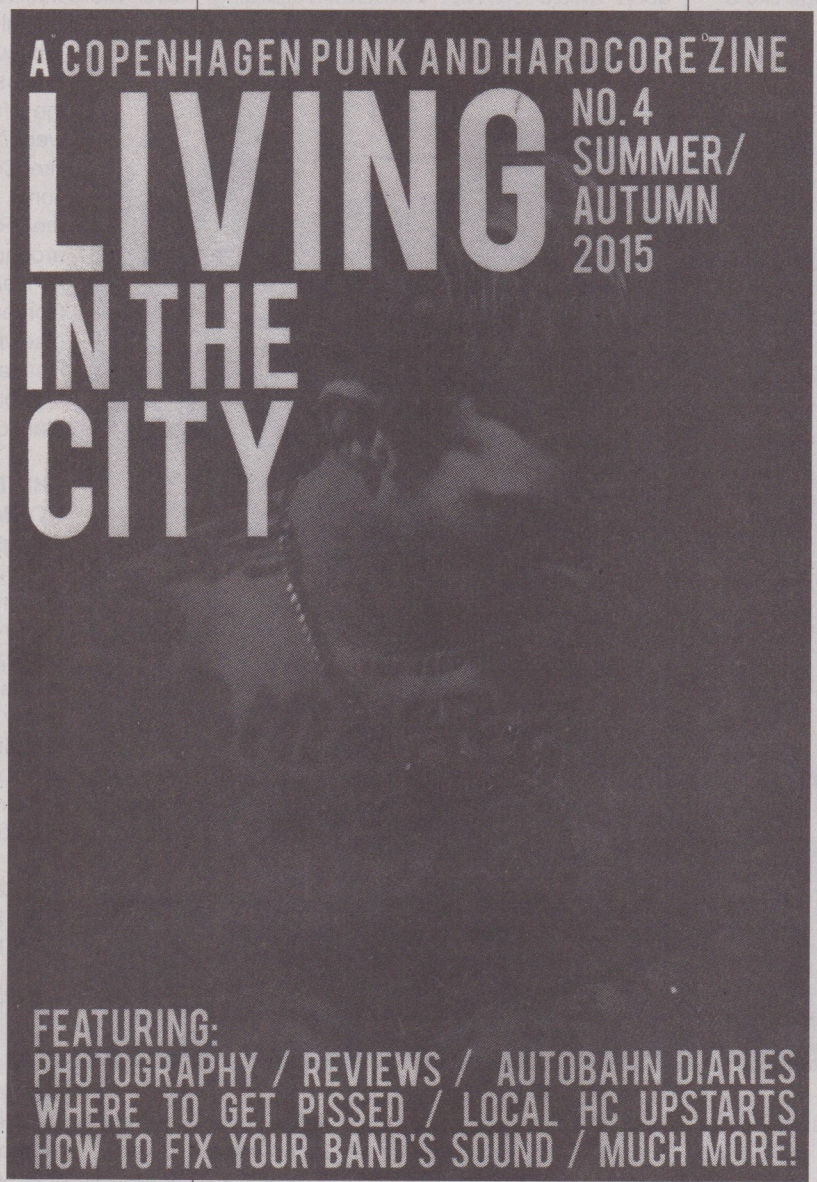
EXERCISING DEMONS #2
$2 or trade, free in Tulsa / 20 pgs

The author says his life is going great now, but you wouldn't know it by reading his zine. It starts with his first-ever recording experience. He's fifty years old and his friends help him get a song together. He's disappointed in the outcome but figures, hey, it's the first time, learn and go forward. The other stories aren't as positive. A few of them are his contributions to a storytelling exhibition, one of which won that month's contest. These emphasize problems he had earlier in life, and take place in a college fraternity and the army. One's esteem for these institutions is not increased. He relates shitty times, but not in a way that's educational or enthralling. The other writing is free verse or song lyrics. These, too, are negative and accusatory. This isn't the kind of mire I'm looking to wallow in. (JM)
Don Leach, 1546 S. 79th Ave., Tulsa, OK 74112 / notmovingpictures.blogspot.com

GARBAGE GIRLS GUIDE #1
24 pgs

It's a junk food zine, mostly Oreo reviews in the first installment. While I'm an outspoken "ignorant eater" here at the *MRR* compound—I've rhapsodized gas station food in these pages as recently as

last month—I realize that I haven't given the humble Oreo nearly the amount of consideration it deserves. It's a weird thing, "a cookie that is made of so many processed ingredients that it's vegan," as Laura puts it here. The byproduct of a supply chain shitsystem that's somehow perfect for broke vegan punks. If you're gonna bite, you can't overthink it. Pretty much every flavor is reviewed here. I didn't know there was such a thing as a Caramel Apple Oreo, and while I could spend a lot of time wondering what kind of marketing strategy considered that a good idea, it's enough to know that I shouldn't try eating it. There are also some reviews of weird snacks from across Europe, some enticing, some confounding. The recipes in the back of this zine are mostly some pretty fucking *sad meals*. *The French Laundry Cookbook* this is not. If you're gonna eat a plain tortilla, are you really gonna warm it up in the microwave instead of on the stove? Come to think of it, the only heat elements for the recipes here are toasters or microwaves. This could come in handy for someone whose gas line has been cut off. (EW) garbagegirlsdc@gmail.com



HEAR ME OUT Vol. 1: Prison Conditions
$3 / 26 pgs

Hear Me Out was put together by an organization in Philadelphia called Books Through Bars; the aim of the zine is to reach a wider audience for the stories of the living conditions of incarcerated people in and around Pennsylvania. Books Through Bars is a volunteer-run organization that sends literature to prisons, and this zine is a result of compiled responses to a questionnaire about literacy and rehabilitation. The responses are varied in subject matter. Some tell of the violence from the correctional officers, or between inmates and inconsistent treatment; some focus more on the lack of resources for prisoners to better themselves. One thing that is repeated is how alone and forgotten they feel. The State relies on the ignorance and apathy of the outside population to continue to get away with treating inmates like human garbage, to say nothing of the profit motive for expanding the prison system, or the modern slavery of prison wages. Reading even one story from this collection is enough to fill you with total outrage. Then the question is: what is to be done with that outrage? Read it and tell your friends to read it. Consider becoming a pen pal or getting involved with organizations like Books Through Bars in your area. (JB) Books Through Bars, 4722 Baltimore Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143 / hearmeout@booksthroughbars.org / booksthroughbars.org

HEAR ME OUT, VOL. 2: REENTRY
32 pgs

Hear Me Out is a series of zines put together by Philly's Books Through Bars program. It's a compilation of letters directly from people inside prison touching on a different topic for each volume. This one deals with the challenges upon reentry to life outside of prison and the lack of support within and outside of prison walls to make that transition successful. *Hear Me Out* swaps handwriting with type and includes the names (unless they ask to remain anonymous) and addresses of all prisoners. There are a myriad of experiences in the system and backgrounds here that all seem to distill into the same conclusions: the shit is so fucked. (EC) Books Through Bars, 4722 Baltimore Ave, Philadelpia, PA 19143 / hearmeout@booksthroughbars.org / booksthroughbars.org

LIVING IN THE CITY: A COPENHAGEN PUNK AND HARDCORE ZINE #4
free / 40 pgs

A very neatly composed and laid out little zine in black and white centered around the K-town scene. The writer, A.S., is definitely into the local scene and gives detailed accounts of sounds and sights, the opinions expressed in a very candid way. After a small intro and a "yellow pages" for punks, the writer presents some festival, band and scene news, reviews of local record releases, as well as some of the writer's faves from the last couple years. Also included in this issue: a Vexx show report, K-town Hardcore fest in (sick!) photos, a little sound lesson from sound engineer Mette, who also wrote a guest column for this mag, a comics / funny page, and a road trip report from K-town punk bands The War Goes On, Polio & Julie, Warbeast and Dark Matter doing a mini tour of Germany. To close off the issue are interviews with locals Direct Youth, some suggestions for where to drown your sorrows when drinking in K-town and a briefing on some punks who set up their own small businesses together as an alternative to the 9-5 drudgery. Overall it's well written, edited and composed and also lives online!

Check this out if you are going to K-town or have an interest in what's happening there—this is the inside scoop. (LA)
livinginthecityzine.wordpress.com / livinginthecityzine@gmail.com

KISS THE VOID
34 pgs

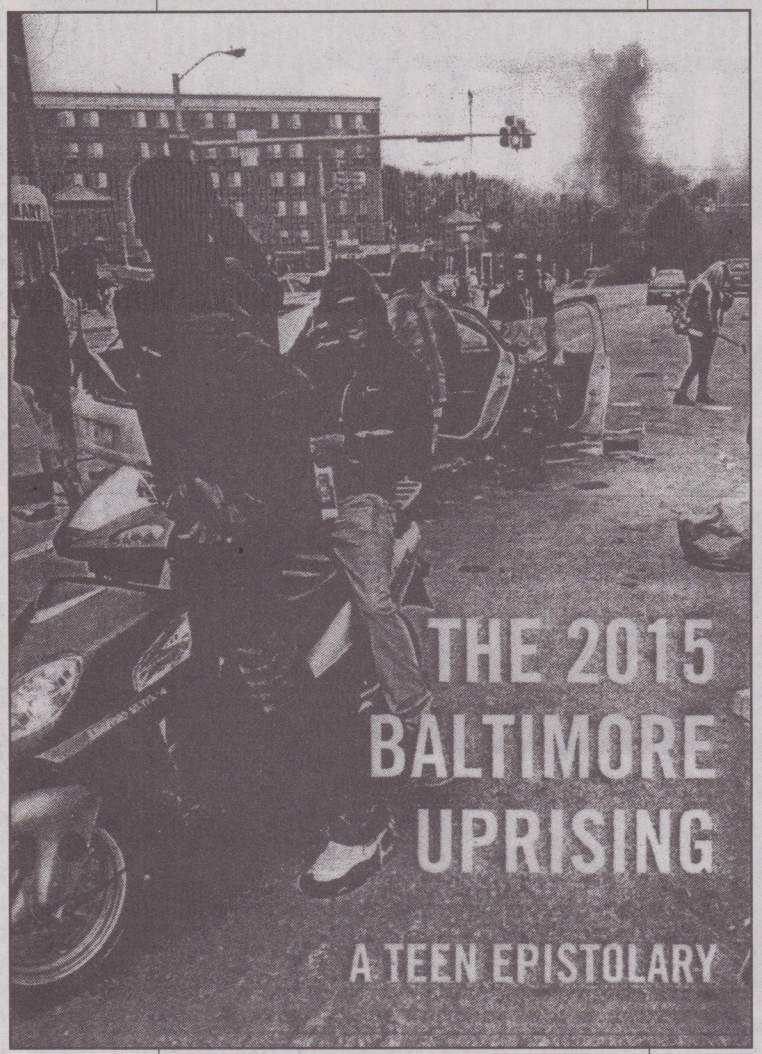
This is crammed with drawings, either dripping down and across the page like a cartoon ice cream or falling into dense grids of bulbous doodleage. Bold black and white cartoonage, piles of swirled turds and goofy faces. There also a collage here and there. Scant text. (MM)
jchamandy@hotmail.com

ORGAN GRINDER #5
$7 / 26 pgs

Very funny and neat (maga)zine with loads of cool games that are great for road trips: a quiz with logos of imaginary baseball teams from movies and TV shows, rhyming words, contranymns (i.e. words that serve as their own antonyms), name the rappers real names, real or not real facts, identifying bikes from movies and their release year, political assassin rebus puzzles and some very complicated crosswords. Plus, I can't forget one of my favorites, the centerfold of famous Daves/Davids (Bowie, Murray, Chappell, etc) or the quiz on Richard Marx vs. Karl Marx quotes! There are two serious pieces, one of which is a history of ABBA's Anni-Frid "Frida" Lungstad who was born in Norway to a mother who was public shamed for her involvement with the Nazis during the occupation (1940-45). Children like Anni-Frid were considered "mentally defective" and often sexually abused or beaten. As the author says, Norway was turned into "somewhat of an Aryan baby mill." It's a really sad story but very interesting part of both history and pop history. Additionally, there's a short *Nothing Mattress* comic that covers kids' paranoia about peeing too close to each other and the homophobia that goes with that weird superstition. Back to the humor, there's a quiz on "Medicine or Metal Band" and it's honestly harder than you might think! If you're looking to get a lot of fun stuff out of a zine, I *hugely recommend* this. (Justin)
organgrindermagazine.com/kungfujimmy@gmail.com

PLASTIC BOMB, #91
€3.50

Another very packed version of this Deutsch punk und Politik zine. There's a good article on H.P. Lovecraft regarding his influence upon horror which also mentions his super shitty ideas on race and his endorsement of Hitler. There's an article about media sensationalism and propaganda which seems to deal with the German media regarding the Russia-Ukraine situation (I wish I could read German better also since I really wanna know more about this group doing charity work for the people Kobane region). There're interviews with the excellent Dysnea Boys (whose 7" is reviewed in this issue of *MRR*), the Kids (as in the bloody Belgians), and rather good German hardcore bands Abfukk, Kick It! and Schmutzstaffel. Plus, they talk to long running punkers Die Schwarzen Schafe, author/comedian (yes, they *do* have comedy in Germany) Heinz Strunk, metallic Swedish crustoids Misanthropic, Mr. Irish Bastard (who I 'spose are the like the "Deutschhkick Murphys" though I kinda like their goofy take on the Sisters of Mercy's "Temple of Love"). Plus, there's a history of the band Suurbiers whose band photo made me laugh as they all had matching Heino shirts! Then there's even more interviews like some band called Social Distortion and another "obscure dude" named Henry Rollins. *Plastic Bomb* is also the place where you see really weird/dumb/silly band names like Cock Riot and find out that some bands like Oi Polloi and the Real McKenzies are still around. In summary, *dieses zine ist sehr interessant zu lessen*. Comes with CD comp. reviewed elsewhere. (Justin)
Postface 100205, D-47002 Duisburg, GERMANY / plasticbomb.de



THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #134
40 pgs

One Hundred and Thirty Four issues of Amerikkka's most under-appreciated Midwest punk zine. It's just one guy but he also needs you to contribute. Show reviews, political ramblings, well-taken photos. What else can you offer? (EC)
PO Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205

THE 2015 BALTIMORE UPRISING: A TEEN EPISTOLARY

The decision to archive the internet in analog form can do this thing where it forces the reader to legitimize what may have previously seemed petty or forgettable. Research and Destroy have taken on a number of volumes archiving ephemeral themes. This issue tackles the more contemporary annals of twitter during the wake of the street level response to the murder of Freddie Gray. Comprised of screenshots the pages take on a feed-like vibe. They feel jumping but referential. This is the kind of small thing that feels huge. (EC)
researchdestroy.com

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the World/Inferno Friendship Society
KARLA ROSE & THE THORNS / VIC THRILL
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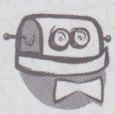

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Priests, Good Throb
members (Andre
DSF

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